

The Green Valley School

By C. W. G. Hyde.



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The Green Valley School

A Pedagogical Story

BY
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Editor of School Education

16984

MINNEAPOLIS
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By C. W. G. HYDE

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This book is affectionately inscribed

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. The New Principal.....	1
II. The School Bully.....	8
III. The County Superintendent.....	22
IV. Visitors' Day	33
V. The Stone Quarry.....	52
VI. A Modern Inquisition.....	62
VII. A Case of Discipline.....	75
VIII. A School Romance.....	90
IX. Edmund Burke	97
X. James Learns a Valuable Lesson.....	106
XI. Heavitree	113
XII. The River Belle	125
XIII. Self Government	141
XIV. Awakening a Sluggard.....	146
XV. Euclid by Moonlight.....	154
XVI. The Fugitive	165
XVII. The Outcome	175



C. W. G. HYDE

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PREFACE

The principal of the Green Valley School is still living. He has had a long and varied experience as teacher and has often been heard to say that if he were to begin a second life on earth, he would, in view of that experience, choose the schoolroom as a field in which to do service to humanity and win that satisfaction which is the reward of a congenial task well done.

The Green Valley School (names are of course changed) is the one school of all in which he has labored, whose memories are sweetest to him. One of his greatest pleasures is in the occasional tidings that come to him from his former pupils. It is still his privilege to meet some of them face to face.

Allie Harley has been something of a traveler. Eva Black's principal work is now in the championship of the woman's suffrage movement. A recent letter from her contains the following passages:

"What a flood of pleasant memories your letter evoked and how the tears spring to the once 'mischievous eyes' as I think of the dear old days. * * * How delighted I was when you would come to my seat and sit beside me a little while now and then. * * * It does, indeed, seem strange to think of Calvin Green (a son of Squire Green, a member of the school board interviewed by Dr. Wakely in Chapter X) as justice of the supreme court; Judge Boyd of the supreme court of ——— said to me that Judge Green writes the smoothest decisions of any judge of his acquaintance. * * *"

The picture of Mr. Harkins, county superintendent of schools in Anita county, is based on memories which linger in the mind of Rutledge Stockley. The old gentleman grew more pedantic and lost none of his geniality as the weight of years accumulated. He lived to a ripe old age.

Mr. Stockley makes an occasional visit to Green Valley and it has been a rare pleasure to him, five—ten—twenty years after the cessation of his work in the Green Valley School, to drop into Dan Loring's grocery store and talk with his old friend about the days and the people of long ago. Poor Dan! he no longer dispenses sugar and sunny smiles over the grocery counter. He has gone "the way of all flesh" and his son—Stockley's old pupil—succeeds him.

"The Green Valley School" is the true record of a real school. Its purpose will be accomplished if they who read it derive as much pleasure from its perusal as the author has experienced in committing the principal's narrative to paper and if, in addition to this, they are able to catch and utilize the spirit which animated Rutledge Stockley and rendered his administration of the Green Valley School a success.

CHAPTER I

THE NEW PRINCIPAL

* * * e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal.—
—*Shakespeare.*

Two men were climbing the plank sidewalk that led from the main street of Green Valley to the white school house on the hill. One was thirty-six to forty years of age, rather richly dressed, whose clear eye and handsome face emphasized the aristocratic bearing which was evident in his voice and movements. The other, who was fifteen to twenty years younger, was slight and pale. He listened with deference to the earnest words addressed to him by his elder companion as they walked briskly up the hill.

"Mr. Stockley," said the elder man, "our correspondence has given me a very favorable impression of you, and I believe you are going to succeed."

"I shall do my best, Mr. Dow," replied Mr. Stockley, "and with the support you have promised me on the part of the board, I hardly see how I can fail if I

show ordinary tact and ability."

"You can count on help from me in any reasonable measure," returned Mr. Dow, "but you'll find some rough boys and some troublesome girls. The two Blazer boys are roughs; Eva Black and Allie Harley will have all the fun they can with the new teacher and Jim Wakeley will do whatever a sneak can do, to toss thorns into your path. But on the whole, you'll find the scholars well-disposed. Drop in and see me this evening, and we will talk things over."

Rutledge Stockley, the new teacher of the Green Valley School was a native of central New York who had migrated to Minnesota for mixed hygienic and commercial reasons. At the end of six months he took account of stock. There were but few dollars in his purse; he had not found a desirable business opening in St. Paul; and a severe bilious attack had reduced his flesh and strength.

At the suggestion of a friend he wrote to H. L. Dow, director of the Green Valley two-department school, applying for the principalship. Impressed with the manly tone of Stockley's letter and with the evident intelligence and refinement of the writer, Mr. Dow wired him to take the next train for Green Valley. This he did, arriving on the first day of the term at 10 a. m.,—an hour after the usual time for opening the school.

Although in his conversation with Mr. Stockley, Mr. Dow expressed confidence in the ability of the former to conduct the school with success, he had some secret misgivings, for the would-be pedagogue was very pale and very gaunt (he was just rallying from the effects of his illness), and he was entirely destitute of experience as a teacher. For similar reasons

Stockley shrank from the ordeal of making his first appearance as the master of forty lusty western boys and girls, but he had the advantage of a well-founded belief in his own ability and honesty and it was therefore with a courageous heart that he followed the director into the school room and encountered the eighty eyes that were instantly focused upon him.

The pupils, knowing that the new teacher was expected on the 10 a. m. train, had been on the watch, and on catching sight of Mr. Dow and a slim stranger, had rushed into the room and scrambled for their seats.

"Scholars," said Mr. Dow, from behind the teacher's desk, "this is Mr. Stockley, your teacher for this fall and winter. He will give you a good school if you will do your part. I expect you all to study hard and behave like ladies and gentlemen. If any of you make trouble, you will find Mr. Stockley perfectly competent to straighten you out, and I want you to understand right here that he will be backed up in such a case by the board of trustees."

During the delivery of this speech, the new teacher was quietly surveying the room. He did not make the survey with the deliberate purpose to judge of the character of the school—in fact, he was not conscious of attempting any estimate of the pupils, individually or collectively. Nevertheless, a subconscious soliloquy was taking place in his mind: "Rather a rough looking group of boys over there in the back left-hand corner; these two bright young ladies with saucy eyes, near the front,—wonder if they are Eva Black and Allie Harley; that red-haired brute in the rear center is prob-

ably one of the Blazer boys—big and ugly enough to throw me out.”

By the time the director's remarks to the school were finished, the little heart flutter with which the teacher had entered the door had quite subsided, and a feeling of quiet confidence took possession of him. This feeling was strengthened by Mr. Dow's leave-taking. Facing the teacher, the director heartily shook his hand, saying:

“Mr. Stockley, you are the master in this room. If any pupil ever has any doubt on that point—though I don't expect the doubt to arise—the board will promptly set his misunderstanding at rest. Good day.”

A moment later, the door had closed behind the school officer and Stockley was alone with his school. For nearly five seconds he was at sea without a rudder. He had not thought to plan beforehand what should be the first, the second, and the third thing to do in the first hour of school.

Life insurance companies have a fund which accumulates from year to year to secure the payment of its policies. It is called a *reserve*. Every wise person, young or old, accumulates from his reading, his study, and his experiences, a *reserve* upon which he may draw in time of need. Stockley had such a reserve of knowledge, ability, and what the French call *savoir faire*. It is something any person of ordinary ability and small opportunity may have by taking the necessary means for acquiring it. Stockley's *reserve* helped him out of his dilemma.

He seemed to know instinctively that he must be-

gin to act and that he must be the leader from the very start. He remembered that at the district school in old Peterville the first thing a new teacher did was to "take the names."

"Begin talking," said something from the *reserve*, and accordingly he began talking.

"Scholars," he said, "we must try to get acquainted."

While saying this, he opened a drawer in the desk in search of writing paper. Finding none, he asked, "Have any of you some writing paper?"

Eva Black hastened to produce a tablet, which she handed to the teacher.

"Thank you," said he.

He then folded several sheets and tore them into oblongs. Passing along the aisles, he laid one of these on each desk, talking as he did so:

"Mr. Dow has already told you my name. Perhaps you did not all understand it. It is Mr. Stockley. Now, in order that we may be on equal terms, I must know your names. I shall have to record your names and your ages on a register, and so I will ask each of you to write on the paper I place before you your full name, writing in full the given name by which you are generally known."

Continuing in a similar manner, he managed to keep up a flow of words until the names had been written and collected. He took up the papers himself, looking at each pupil's face as he did so, in order to associate the names with the faces.

The first half hour was thus successfully passed; the ice was broken; a favorable impression had been

made on the pupils; and both they and their teacher felt at their ease.

The rest of the forenoon's work was easy. The teacher learned by inquiry how the classes had been organized the preceding year and thus had a basis on which to organize them for the fall term.

By noon the school was in running order, and a program was arranged which was followed with little deviation in the afternoon. Stockley found that the Excelsior Hotel would give him fair board at a reasonable rate and to that hostelry his trunk was taken.

Stockley congratulated himself on finishing the first day without serious friction. Two or three times when his eye had casually fallen on Arthur Blazer's freckled face, he had caught a stealthy wink and a malevolent smile directed across the room to James Wakely. Both boys, while exchanging significant looks, were furtively watching the teacher, and when his glance fell upon them they had hurriedly bent their eyes upon their books.

It was not in Rutledge Stockley's nature to borrow trouble and he gave little thought to what he had seen, yet a vague feeling of uneasiness stole over him when his mind reverted to the evil looks of the two boys, one of whom had been pointed out to him by Mr. Dow as a rough and the other as a sneak.

That evening he called at Mr. Dow's house as he had been invited to do. Mr. Dow gave him additional information relating to conditions in the school and in the community, which he afterward found useful to him. He did not mention to the director his apprehension of trouble from Arthur and James, as it was

not sufficiently defined in his own mind to warrant serious attention. While the two men were conferring in the library, Mrs. Dow entered the room, ostensibly to find a book,—in reality to inspect the new teacher.

"Mrs. Dow," said her husband, "this is Mr. Stockley, our new principal."

"Very glad to meet you," said Stockley, rising.

Mrs. Dow bowed slightly, and smiled as she uttered some conventional phrase.

Mrs. Dow was a handsome woman in form and face. She was about twenty-five years of age, was becomingly and rather expensively dressed, and had the air of one who aspired to social leadership. It can hardly be said that she gave Stockley a cordial greeting, but there was evident in her manner a desire to impress him favorably.

Stockley was not a character reader, but in the five minutes of Mrs. Dow's stay in the library, his intellect, independently of his consciousness, formed an estimate of her character which, though not clearly defined, was true, as proved by subsequent developments.

She did not wear her heart upon her sleeve; it appeared, in spite of her, in her face. Her smile was not cold—she meant it to be warm; it was not malicious—she tried to make it gracious; there was a flitting, lurking, covert spirit of evil in it which is best described by the word *sinister*.

After a few commonplaces regarding the weather, the school, the community, and Mr. Stockley's antecedents, she withdrew, and Stockley soon after bade Mr. Dow good night.

CHAPTER II

THE SCHOOL BULLY

Behold on wrong

Swift vengeance waits; and art subdues the strong!

—*Pope.*

When school was dismissed at noon on the first day, the pupils were hungry and they hastened home for their dinners without lingering to discuss the new teacher. When closing time arrived in the afternoon, everyone had an opinion of him. At least half of the children left the school grounds singly or in groups, in animated chatter about their play, their studies, and the various things that interest boys and girls. When James Wakely stepped out of the front door, he found Arthur Blazer waiting for him at the corner of the building. With a rearward twist of the head, the latter signaled that he wanted James's company. The two strolled together across a field, away from the other pupils.

"Say, Jim," said Arthur, in a low tone, "how d'ye like bein' bossed by a blasted dude?" These were not Arthur's exact words. Should he read this record, we trust he will be disposed to think leniently of the liberty we take in euphemizing his language in order to adapt it to the taste of the "gentle reader."

"I don't like it a little bit," was the reply, "but what's a fellow to do? Old Dow said we'd all have to toe the mark."

"Toe the blazes!" exclaimed Arthur, "if ye have

the spunk of a sick rabbit ye'll stand up for yer rights."

"I'm not afraid of him," said James, "but I won't be a monkey to pull your chestnuts out of the fire; I'm not afraid to do anything you've got nerve to do."

"Not afraid, eh? Well, what're ye proposin' to do? Didn't ye say ye wasn't goin' to study g'ogerphy no more? And now this bloomin' high stepper's goin' to put ye into 'nother g'ogerphy class."

"Not if the court knows herself! Say, Art., if you'll stand by me, I won't go into that geography class tomorrow. Let's both refuse to go to recitation. He's a poor, puny fellow and if we stand right up to him he'll be as limp as a dish rag."

This was the proposal that Arthur had tried to draw James on to make. Arthur was the school bully, and he was ambitious to be regarded as a hero. If he could bluff the master, well and good. If the master should attack him, he would have an excuse for resistance and he resolved, in that case, to win the admiration of the school by throwing the dudish principal out of the door or the window as should be found the more convenient.

Before the boys parted they had entered into a compact to refuse point-blank ~~to~~ Mr. Stockley should insist upon their entering the geography class next day.

Stockley arrived at the schoolhouse next morning half an hour before nine. He carried the key of the front door, which opened into his part of the building,—the "grammar school department." The rear room, which was occupied by the "primary department," had an outside door on the side of the building. There was also a door opening from Stockley's

room directly into that of Miss Dix, the primary teacher. At about quarter before nine he saw a lady whom he supposed to be Miss Dix, pass his windows and enter her room. He had not met the primary teacher, for Mr. Dow had given him to understand that altho he was nominally principal, the primary department was under the exclusive management of Miss Dix. However, he made a brief call upon her, because, as he told her, such near neighbors ought not to be entire strangers.

The method of "calling school" and "calling the roll" may seem an insignificant matter and hardly worthy of being dignified by detailed description in the history of the Green Valley School. Not so did it seem to Rutledge Stockley. He had done much careful thinking during his waking hours since the close of school the day before. He had already become interested in his work and a personal friendship for his pupils had begun to germinate in his heart or mind or soul—the psychological reader may decide which.

In his utter lack of normal school training and experience as a teacher, he was compelled to draw upon his common sense and that *reserve* to which reference has already been made. He saw that he must not again commit the error of going to his work without a definite plan, which might be made to bend according to circumstances. In the quiet of his room at the hotel, he forecast the necessary, the probable, and the possible events of the day, and adopted a flexible—tho not indefinite—plan for dealing with them. The first four things on his plan were to arrive at the school-house at half past eight, to call on Miss Dix, to "call

school," and to call the roll. He regarded nothing too trifling for serious consideration that had a bearing on the moral and mental development of his pupils. He therefore planned just how he would "call school," and how he would call the roll.

He had set his watch at exactly the right time by the regulator in the jewelry store. At precisely two minutes before nine, he went to the front door and rang a small hand bell he had found in a dusty closet. Some of the pupils started at once for the door; others lingered to finish a game of ball or pull-away; and a few appeared indifferent to the call.

With a crayon in hand, the teacher took place at the front blackboard, near the door. At exactly nine, he gave a single tap with the bell and said:

"You may call in succession the numbers given you yesterday, beginning with number one. I will place on the board any numbers that are not called."

There was dead silence. "One," said the teacher, as he placed the figure 1 on the blackboard. "One!" shouted Tommy Ahlse, who through bashfulness and uncertainty had failed to call his number at the right time. There was a suppressed titter.

The teacher did not frown,—he smiled. He knew that Tommy was present. He might have said, "Begin, Tommy," but to do that would have established a troublesome precedent. He saw here an opportunity to teach Tommy and the school a lesson of promptness by training him to begin at the conventional signal, which was the tap of the bell.

The roll-call proceeded: "two," "three," "four." "Five," said the teacher, placing the figure on the board. When Jessie Nutting was calling "twenty-

nine," her voice was drowned—or rather sand-bagged—by a bellowing "FIVE" from the rear-center of the room. Arthur Blazer had purposely delayed his number "just for fun," and he now shot it at the teacher to brace himself for the part he had promised to play later in the day. A loud guffaw from James Wakeley and two other boys greeted Arthur's sally. All eyes were turned on the teacher to see how he would take it. He said nothing, but placed an oblique cross beside the figure 5 on the board, and the roll call proceeded. Arthur and James were disappointed. When the last number had been called, Stockley turned to address the school.

One of the girls had her hand raised.

"What is it, Susie?"

"I called my number."

"What is your number?"

"Number twenty-three."

Stockley placed a cross by that number.

"Thirty-two," piped another girl.

The cross was properly placed.

"Is there any other pupil who was present at the beginning of roll call," asked Stockley, "whose number is in this column without a cross beside it?"

There was no response. A few belated ones had entered the room during roll call.

"Now scholars," said Stockley, "I want to have a little family talk with you, for I hope that by Christmas or before, I shall have for you, and you for me, very much such a feeling as members of a good family have for one another. I wish to believe that all of you are here because you want me to help you to become

intelligent and noble young men and women. In the first place, we must be patient with each other. I ask you to be patient with me, for I shall make mistakes; but I shall wish all the time to do what is right by you. I want to be patient with you and to believe that if anything you do appears mean or vicious, it is only a mistake, which you will correct when it is pointed out to you.

Now I must not preach a sermon, but I will speak of a few things about which we ought to have an understanding, in order to have the machinery of the school run smoothly.

Every pupil was giving the closest attention. Stockley's words appealed to their good sense and their good sense responded to the appeal. He continued:

"The first thing I wish to speak of is how to call you in from the play-ground. The time for opening in the morning is 9 o'clock. I rang the bell two minutes before nine. Perhaps that allows you too little time. What do you think?"

Allie Harley raised her hand, and, in response to Stockley's nod, said: "It'd take anyone four or five minutes to come from the farthest part of the yard."

"Quite likely, and it is possible that five minutes is hardly enough time. Suppose we try it right now, and we can fix the time for ringing the bell accordingly. I would like to have some one go to that scrub oak I see just outside the school grounds and then walk back and take his seat, walking about as fast as he generally does in the street. I will time him from the moment he leaves the tree. How will that do?"

he asked, looking about the room. No one spoke, but several of the girls and boys smilingly nodded their heads.

This was a different way of beginning a term from any they had ever experienced, and the idea pleased them.

"Charlie Marfield, will you go?"

Charlie assented, and away he went.

"Allie," said Stockley, "will you come and help me keep time?"

Allie looked around at the other girls with a half-pleased grimace and took her place at the window with the teacher, who held his watch in his hand. Looking at the window, Charlie started at Stockley's signal, just as the second hand began a circuit. Presently Charlie opened the door and walked to his seat.

"Allie may announce the time it took," said Stockley.

"Forty-four seconds," was the report.

The pupils looked at one another with surprise and incredulity, and at recess some of them taxed Charlie with running "as tight as he could lick," but he stoutly declared he had walked at an ordinary gait.

"What do you think now," asked the teacher, "will two minutes be enough time?"

No objection being raised, it was decided that the calling-in bell should be rung two minutes before the time of beginning work in the morning and afternoon sessions and after recess.

"Now," resumed the master, "there is another matter I would like to talk over with you, and this matter, too, must be settled in a way that is best for *your* in-

terests, because this school is not supported for my benefit. First, let me ask all who have come into the room since we *began* roll-call to rise." Three pupils rose.

"Please give me your number, Ole."

"Fourteen."

"Yours, Alice."

"Thirty-eight."

Yours, Calvin."

"Forty."

As the numbers were given, the teacher placed some figures near them, and the pupils took their seats. The numbers then appeared on the board like this:

×	1
×	5
11	14
	17
×	23
×	32
	35
5	38
4	40

"These numbers with an oblique cross at the left do not really belong here," explained Stockley. "They belong to pupils who were in their seats at 9 o'clock. The small figures at the left of 14, 38, and 40 show how many minutes after nine each one came in. Numbers 17 and 35 are still absent. The trustees require me to keep a record of your attendance which shall show three things each day: first, who are present; second, who are absent; and third, who enter after nine o'clock." At this point Mary Milligan raised her hand.

"What is it, Mary?"

"Is it called tardy," asked Mary, "if you come in a minute or two after nine?"

"It does not matter very much what it's called," replied the teacher; "is it after nine two minutes or one minute after nine, or even two seconds or one second after nine? If you wish to take a train to St. Paul and you arrive at the station two seconds too late, are you left? You would hardly ask the station agent whether he *calls* it left."

"I can't always be here at nine o'clock," broke in Henry Stular.

"There may be several of you situated like Henry," said Stockley. "The record does not show whether you are to blame or not; it simply shows that you were in your seats or that you were not, at a certain time."

"Yer watch's too fast," blurted out Arthur Blazer, in an impudent tone.

"That is certainly possible," was the reply. "It was set this morning by Mr. Robinson's regulator, which is corrected every day to show right time. There is likely to be considerable difference in your clocks at home, and I suggest that you aim to be here at least five minutes before opening time. Now, we will begin the lessons of the day. I will arrange later for some regular opening exercises. You have assisted me very much in settling some important points, and the time consumed has not been thrown away."

The school exercises proceeded with the usual incidents until the time for the geography class in the afternoon.

It would perhaps be better art to defer the incident which follows to a later stage of the story. It may be that in a properly constructed plot, it should be inserted at about the end of the first two weeks of school. The reason for relating it here is that it actually happened on this day, the second day of school.

Children's minds act with greater rapidity in the formation of opinions than the minds of older people. Their opinions also change more readily. It by no means follows that children are more likely to err in their opinions or estimates of a stranger's character than are their elders. Rutledge Stockley had been principal of the Green Valley school only a little more than one day, yet it is not putting it too strongly to say that he had already captured the school. There was manifest in all he said and did the purpose to do right. The scholars had adroitly been made to feel that the school was theirs. The school-master had consulted them, had taken them into his confidence, had made them his co-partners in the direction of school interests. There was already growing in them a sense of responsibility for the maintenance of order and good conduct.

Stockley did not sit behind his desk while hearing recitations. He had a notion that it would promote the good-fellowship relation he was anxious to establish with his pupils, to keep himself constantly in their midst, and furthermore that to do so would forestall the inception of the mischiefs—small and great—which are so wasteful of the pupils' time, and so prejudicial to good order.

At half past two the fourth reader class was ex-

caused from the recitation seats and Stockley called, "The geography class."

This was the moment to which Arthur Blazer and James Wakely had looked forward all day,—the latter with faint-hearted apprehension, the former with perfect confidence in his ability to successfully defy the master and inaugurate his own reign for the year as the bully of Green Valley school. Arthur quickly glanced at James to see if he was game, but the latter avoided Arthur's eye. His jaw was slightly trembling and he had a queer throbbing in his throat. Meanwhile the other members of the geography class were passing to the recitation seats in front. When they were seated Stockley noticed the absence of Arthur and James.

"Arthur—James," said he, "the geography class has been called."

James looked down at an open book on his desk; his mouth was getting dry; his face was pale; his hands shook. Arthur stared at the master and said nothing.

Stockley had but a moment for thought; he was not sure of the best thing to say, but it would not do to ignore the defiant conduct of the boys; he must say something. Again his reserve of power and good sense came to his aid.

"Arthur," he said, "do you remember that you were put into the geography class?" It had not taken him three seconds to see that Arthur was the commander in chief of the rebellious force, and he instantly decided to attack the citadel.

"I ain't goin' to study g'ogерphy," bellowed Ar-

thur.

"Have you talked with your parents about it?"

"I don't haf to talk 'th 'em."

"Arthur, if there is any good reason why you should not enter the geography class, I will discuss it with you later. But today, I wish you to come into the class."

There was no reply from Arthur.

He leaned back in his seat, his lips tightly closed, an evil smile lurking at the corners of his mouth, his head slowly turning from side to side as his eyes made bids for admiration from under his lowered eyebrows. Stockley was already pale and the little color remaining in his face now left it. It was, however, with a firm tone that he said:

"Are you coming to the class, Arthur?"

"No!" roared the bully, his stubby hair bristling defiance, as he braced himself for the shock of the battle. But the shock did not come.

"Very well," said the teacher. "Mary, please name the cotton states." The recitation proceeded as if nothing had occurred to disturb the tranquillity of the school. The girls, who had begun to look frightened, grew calm and tried to resume their study. The faces of some of the boys showed their disgust at the timid way in which the teacher had backed down. It was in the air that Stockley had lowered himself in the estimation of the school, and he keenly felt it. But he gave no outward sign of his feeling. As the recitation progressed, he paced back and forth along the aisles and in front of the class, pausing a moment to partly open the front door as if

he needed more air. He had no book in his hand, for he knew the lesson. His path brought him behind Arthur's seat, and the boy quickly turned as if expecting an assault. The teacher moved forward past him without diverting his eyes from the pupil who was reciting.

But while outwardly calm, his mind was in a ferment. He seemed to have two brains which worked independently of each other,—one conducting the geography class and the other thinking, thinking, thinking out the problem that had been so suddenly sprung upon him.

"This boy is twice my size"—so ran the thoughts of brain number two—"and has twice my strength; if I attack him, he is likely to thrash the floor with me or throw me out of the window; if I don't settle this thing right here and now, my control over the disorderly few is gone—in fact my influence over the entire school is ruined." Again he approached the rear of Blazer's desk. At this point, Stockley was dimly conscious that brain number one heard a pupil saying: "Mobile, the metropolis of Alabama, is" He heard no more; all the blood in his body seemed to rush into his legs and his arms; he had the strength of three men; a rattling of seat hinges sounded thru the room, and when the startled pupils looked around, a muscular body crowned by a bullet head was jumping and bounding and bumping down the aisle, followed by a pale figure whose hands clutched a strong coat collar. In less than ten seconds both figures had disappeared thru the front door which Stockley had, while pacing the floor,

opened for that purpose. At the moment Blazer struck the earth outside, Stockley straightened him up and looking into his eye while his finger pointed to the road, said "GO!" The bully was not a fool. He knew he had found his master and he went.

When Stockley returned to the room, he saw several white faces. Some of the girls were crying. Nearly all the pupils were standing and some had rushed to the windows. He stood on the threshold and looked around. An adult audience would have applauded. The pupils testified their appreciation of his leadership by quietly taking their seats. James Wakely's eyes were bent upon his desk.

"James," said Mr. Stockley in a quiet tone. James looked up. Without a word the teacher pointed to a vacant place on the recitation seats, and without protest, James sneaked forward and took it.

It was a moral and not a physical victory that the new teacher had won, and the school so understood it.

CHAPTER III

THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

Some, for renown, on scraps of learning dote,
And think they grow immortal as they quote.
—*Young.*

The outcome of the disturbance described in the last chapter gave rise to no feeling of pride on Stockley's part. On the other hand he was not disturbed with regret or shame for his own action in the matter. He would have preferred not to have such an issue arise as was presented in Arthur's conduct, but it was forced upon him, and in his method of meeting it he followed the dictate of the best judgment he possessed.

He learned by inquiry of Miss Dix at the close of school, that Arthur's father was a blacksmith, and having ascertained the location of his shop, he went there immediately after the close of school.

He knew the story would begin to travel as soon as the children reached their homes. He knew it would take as many shapes as there were children to tell it, and that as it spread through the community it would take on fantastic forms and would grow like a rolling snowball. He believed it important that Mr. Blazer should hear the story from an original source before any distorted version of it should reach him.

Mr. Blazer was in his shop, but another man was with him. Stockley introduced himself to the two

as the new teacher, saying that as he would probably remain in Green Valley several months he wanted to become acquainted with his neighbors, and particularly with the parents of his scholars. After a half hour's conversation on New York, Minnesota, Green Valley, St. Paul, the crops, and other topics, the third man withdrew, and Stockley gave Arthur's father a full account of the event of the afternoon.

"Now, Mr. Blazer," said he, "it must be understood that Arthur is not expelled from school; the school is maintained for the benefit of every person in the district of school age, and I would have no right to expel him even if I desired to do so, which I do not. The door is wide open for his return at any time."

"I'm mighty glad you done jist the way you did," said Mr. Blazer; "the boy shall go back tomor'r mornin' and beg y'r pardon f'r 'is behavior."

"No apology is required of Arthur," replied Stockley. "Arthur's offence was more against himself than against me. A teacher's dignity must be very flimsy if it can't be maintained without an apology for every offence the pupils commit. The only requirement is that he do the best for himself and that he keep from disturbing the school. Suppose you tell Arthur to go to school in the morning as if nothing unusual had happened. If he wishes to do this, I shall not speak of this trouble to him or to any one else except the members of the board."

Mr. Blazer gladly assented to this disposition of the matter, and Stockley never afterward referred to it, except to Mr. Dow, whom he acquainted with the inci-

dent that evening. It would be pleasant to record that Arthur returned to school and became an exemplary pupil. Unfortunately, however, he was so constituted that his wounded vanity did not readily heal, and he had not sufficient courage to endure the ordeal of facing the school in whose presence he had been so signally humbled. Two of his brothers continued in school, and were models of good behavior.

In order to give legality to Stockley's contract with the board of trustees, it was necessary for him to take an examination before the county superintendent of schools and obtain a certificate of qualification from that officer. The public examination of the county teachers had already taken place, but it was in the discretion of the superintendent to examine an applicant privately for a small fee. Mr. Harkins, the superintendent of Anita county, lived on a farm at Summer Lake, twelve miles distant, but he frequently visited Green Valley, which was the county seat.

Stockley's inquiries about Mr. Harkins always elicited a smile from the Green Valley people. "He's a queer old duffer," said Harry Dole. "Odd as Dick's hatband;" "Ye'd think he'd swallowed a dictionary to hear 'im talk;" "A very learned man;" "Mighty good man, but likes 'is toddy too well." These and similar expressions were contributed gratuitously by a group of men, young and old, who sat or lounged on boxes and on the counter in Dan Loring's grocery store. Dan was one of Stockley's earliest acquaintances in the village. Going into the store for the purchase of some trifle, he had been attracted by the grocer's jolly face

and the kindly and honest frankness that was apparent in his conversation and manner. Dan had been predisposed to respect Stockley by the account of the Arthur Blazer incident coming to him thru his son Charlie, whose reports of the new teacher's methods had prepared his father to greet the stranger with cordiality. Stockley had dropped in to Loring's store to inquire about the road to Summer Lake and to ask some questions relating to the county superintendent. His inquiry had elicited the remarks recorded above. He learned from Dan that Harkins was a man of remarkable intelligence, a constant reader of books and newspapers, somewhat disposed to pedantic vanity, but, withal, gracious to intelligent people who were sagacious enough to listen with apparent intensity of interest to his extended monologues on literature, art, history, and politics.

Dan further informed the teacher that the superintendent spent his Saturdays at the county seat, and that he "put up" at the Excelsior Hotel, so that it would be unnecessary to make the trip to Summer Lake.

On the third Saturday of Stockley's stay in Green Valley, he met the county superintendent of schools. He had just entered the hotel office after a chat with Dan Loring. "Mr. Stockley," said Austin Black, the landlord, "let me make you acquainted with Mr. Harkins. Mr. Harkins is the county superintendent."

While Mr. Black was talking, Stockley turned and took a rapid survey of the educational magnate. What he saw was a neatly dressed man of short stature with a thin, intellectual face; small blue eyes whose red and

watery lids might indicate either studious or bibulous tendencies; thin, grayish hair; a thin chest; thin, bony, and veiny hands; thin legs; and, as he soon discovered, a thin voice. Stockley took the slender hand which he saw extended toward him and uttered a brief conventionalism to which Mr. Harkins listened with courteous attention before delivering his own more ceremonious greeting. He gave his head an almost imperceptible oscillatory movement from side to side, which subsided into a slight inclination to the left, as he said:

"Mr. Stockley, you may possibly recall the lines written by the poet Shenstone on a tavern window:

Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn.

"Let me assure you, sir, that such welcome to Anita County as can be given in an inn I most heartily extend to you."

His manner was grave, and his consciousness of saying something well worth hearing was manifest in a pose and manner that were easy to interpret but difficult to describe. Stockley was at a loss how to reply to a salutation so imposing. However, he managed to thank the superintendent for his cordiality and to intimate that he was a candidate for examination with a view to obtaining a license to teach.

"The ceremony of examination, sir," said the superintendent, "is one which, by the statutes of the state, is imperative. I have little faith in the modern vogue of measuring a prospective teacher's brain by arithmetical and linguistical interrogatories. However, un-

der present conditions, this form is a necessity, and *necessitas non habet legem*.”¹

The Latin quotation was delivered with the head-oscillation and -tilting referred to above and a light emphasis on the words quoted as if in acknowledgment that they were not original. Stockley had some doubt as to the applicability of the quotation to the then present conditions, but his classical lore was limited to a very slight acquaintance with the writings of an Asiatic slave by the name of Aesop, and he could not be certain.

“Where will it be most convenient for you to take the examination?” asked Stockley.

“I think, sir,” replied Mr. Harkins, that we shall be able to colloque more satisfactorily in some place where we will not be subjected to the gaze of the vulgar. It is by no means desirable that we be

‘Gorgonized from head to foot

With a stony [rustic] stare.’

Let us retire to the sitting-room.”

The sitting-room was vacant, and Stockley seated himself at the center-table with a tablet and pencil.

“Mr. Stockley,” began the superintendent, after they were seated, “I lay no claim to clairvoyance by chaomancy,² onomancy,³ or any other species of divination, but I am impelled to say (and it is no flattery to you to say it) that your face is a guarantee of your scholarship, and even your name carries with it an assurance of culture. In order to comply with the *lex*

¹Necessity is not governed by law

²Divination from appearances in the air

³Divination from the letters of a name

scripta,⁴ however, I must apply the test of arithmancy. You may work this problem if you please:

"What is the difference between six dozen dozen and half a dozen dozen?"

Stockley quickly gave the right answer without using his pencil.

"I am pleased with your proficiency in this science," said Mr. Harkins, with gusto, "for altho too much emphasis is given in our schools to so-called practical work in arithmetic, such work being to a considerable degree *ad captandum vulgus*¹, still there is a high value in mathematical exercises, when rightly conducted, which manifests itself in increased power to cogitate with exactness and to arrive at conclusions with precision. The Phenicians, in initiating the ancient Greeks into the science of number, conferred upon Europe far more than the power to make commercial calculations; they laid the foundation of a mental culture which contributed in no small measure to that refinement which was Greece, that strength which was Rome, that freedom which was to issue from the womb of time under the name of England, and that progress which was to characterize her lusty daughter, America."

Stockley was interested in the remarks of the superintendent, but he feared that night would come before the conclusion of the examination.

"Mr. Harkins," he ventured, at the first pause, "your reflections interest me very much, and it shall

⁴Statute law

¹To please the common people

be my endeavor to profit by them. What further test would you like to give me in arithmetic?"

"No further test; of arithmetic we have had *quantum sufficit*²; I am quite satisfied with the knowledge you have displayed, and now we will turn to the consideration of a subject which should occupy a large place in all the schools of a democratic country. What grammar have you studied, Mr. Stockley?"

"Goold Brown's, sir."

"You could not have done better. Goold Brown is the legitimate successor of Lindley Murray, whose great work has contributed more to the real greatness of America than the wonderful inventions of Eli Whitney and Robert Fulton, with which it was contemporary. Do you remember, sir, the words of Quintilian on the title page of Brown's grammar? I see them there distinctly, at this moment, a little below the middle of the page." Here the little man's head oscillated and settled into its quotation tilt as he softly rolled out: "*Nē quis igitur tanquam parva fastidiat Grammaticos elementa.*"³

He gave the young teacher time to recover from the effect of the quotation before saying, "Will you kindly repeat Brown's last rule of syntax?"

This was the longest and, to Stockley, the most obscure of Brown's rules, but he had committed it when in school, word for word, and he now promptly repeated it, from "A future contingency" to "requires the indicative mood."

"Excellent!" was the superintendent's commenda-

²Enough

³Let no student of grammar, therefore, despise elementary principles on the ground that they are of trifling importance

tion, "and now I will ask you to parse this passage from a poet of merit, Thomas Hoccleve, who, in his *Letter of Cupid*, ministered to the pleasure of no less a monarch than the puissant Henry of England, fifth of that name:

'O! every man ought to have a herté tendre
Unto woman, and deem her honourable,
Whether her shape be either thick or slender,
Or she be bad or good, this is no fable.'

The parsing was done to the satisfaction of the superintendent, who, after impressing upon the examinee the importance of grammar as *cos ingeniorum*,⁴ as well as "a means of combating the vicious tendency of the age to *logodaedaly*,"⁵ proceeded to test him in history, orthography, "chirography," and reading. The time given to these subjects was occupied, in the main, by the examiner, himself, who, for the edification of his interlocutor and the gratification of his own vanity, drew upon the quaint treasures in the storehouse of his memory.

"And now, Mr. Stockley," he said, in conclusion, "I trust you have not found our conference operose.⁶ It is a veritable delight to me to introduce into our educational coterie so erudite a person as yourself. It may be levelful⁷ to remark that, assuming the truth of the proverb *vultus est index animi*,⁸ you have before

⁴A sharpener of the wits.

⁵A playing with words

⁶Tedious

⁷Permissible

⁸The face is an index of the mind

you a fruitful as well as a profitable career. You have the scholarly vocation; in exact proportion to your devotion as a teacher will be your progress as a scholar; *qui docet discit*.⁹ Shrink from no burden which you find in the line of your duty; *leve fit quod bene fertur onus*.¹⁰ Relieve, *quantum vis*,¹¹ the tedium of your labors by legitimate pleasure, for as Publius Syrus tersely puts it 'The bow too tensely strung is easily broken.' Avoid nugacity,¹² follow, *foriter et recte*,¹³ those inner promptings which you instinctively cognize as true.

'And it must follow, as the night the day,' that your success in your chosen profession is assured. I will now prepare the document which shall be your legal warrant for pursuing your work in this county."

So saying, he filled the blanks in a certificate of the first grade which he took from his satchel, placing the number 10 opposite the name of each branch.

Stockley was amazed. He had answered the simplest questions in the "common branches," and no questions on the "higher branches" had been asked, yet he saw on the margin of his certificate, "Geometry, 10," "Physics, 10," etc. He made no protest. There was much in Mr. Harkins's hortation (He could hardly help thinking now in such latin words as he knew) which he did not understand, but there was also much that appealed to him as valuable. He therefore de-

⁹A person who teaches learns

¹⁰A burden is lightened by being bravely borne

¹¹As much as you choose

¹²Flippancy

¹³Bravely and honestly

terminated to profit by his superintendent's advice and to cultivate his friendship.

Mr. Harkins soon bade Stockley good night, and he retired to his bed a licensed teacher.

CHAPTER IV.

VISITORS DAY

The lads and lassies in their best
Were dress'd from top to toe.—Ransford.

When Rutledge Stockley applied for the principalship of Green Valley School, he had no definite plan for the future. It was "Necessity's sharp pinch" that turned the scale in favor of teaching as a temporary expedient, while he was deliberating on the ways and means of maintaining himself thru a Minnesota winter. At the close of his first week in Green Valley, he liked his work; at the end of a fortnight, he found himself thoroughly interested in it; and by the time six weeks had passed he was seriously considering the question of committing himself to the teacher's life. He had never been in college and had not even finished a preparatory course. He had once skimmed over twenty or thirty pages of an elementary algebra in a night school and had made a futile attempt, in old Fateville Academy, to penetrate the mysteries of Aesop's fables with the assistance of those worthies, Andrews and Stoddard, so well known to the academy student of the nineteenth century. He had, at the time our story begins, a certain polish resulting from a half-dozen years of metropolitan life and heightened by a few months of transatlantic travel. By general reading, he had gathered the cream of English and American literature; had become, in a way, acquainted with the fundamental propositions of religious, moral,

political, educational, and speculative philosophy; and had picked up some surface knowledge of "science,"— enough to render apparent to him his profound ignorance of its details and its principles.. He had learned grammar, arithmetic, geography, rhetoric, and logic by contact with business and business men, and by reading good current literature. He had become a good oral reader by absorbing, without knowing it, the style of Wallack and Dyott, Edwin Forrest and Macready, as exhibited in the theatres of New York, or rather by imbibing the essential ideas out of which their style grew, for Stockley was not a slavish imitator.

The young teacher would have been found poorly equipped for a rigid technical examination, given by a superintendent of the microscopic order, but Mr. Harkins had had the insight to see and the wisdom to give recognition to his general fitness for his work and his "promise and potency" of growth. In fact, Harkins, soon after handing Stockley his certificate, had said to Mr. Dow, with his lateral head-tilt, "I am able to apply to your new teacher, sir, a line from the third book of Edward Young's *The Last Days*:

"There buds the promise of celestial worth."

It must not be understood, however, that Stockley had made no special preparation for the close questioning he had expected from Mr. Harkins. He had "boned down" to special study for two weeks and had twice surprised himself at work in the

" . . . wee short hours ayont the twal."

A few months later, when he had become better acquainted with his county superintendent, he told him,

laughingly, of his strenuous nocturnal labors in preparation for climbing an examination-mountain which had changed into a conversational mole-hill. Whereupon that official cocked his head on one side and said, with a pleasant twinkle of the eye: "I suspect, sir, that you are in sympathy with the sentiment expressed by Tom Moore in *The Young May Moon*:

'And the best of all ways
To lengthen our days

Is to steal a few hours from the night, my dear.'"

As Stockley's desire to follow the teacher's life grew stronger, there grew up beside it the determination to rank first-rate in that calling. To that end he began reading professional books. It cannot be said with truth that he laid out for himself a *course* of professional reading. It might possibly have been better had he done so, but—right or wrong—he planned for only one book at a time. When that was completed, he procured another, not because that was the next one on a list that had been made up by himself or by a reading circle, but because, for a reason that was not always the same, it particularly attracted him when he was ready for it.

He became a member of the Teachers Reading Circle for Anita County, and he faithfully pursued the line of reading and study planned by the State Teachers Reading Circle Board. At the meetings of the Circle in the Green Valley section of the county, he was the tacitly acknowledged leader. While unavoidably subconscious of his mental superiority, his modest demeanor and his hearty co-operation in all exercises

forestalled jealousy and made him a favorite with the members of the Circle.

But while he entered cordially into the prescribed plans of the Reading Circle, he was so constituted—or thought he was—that he could secure the greatest benefit by proposing to himself some easily attainable end, and pushing on, when that end was reached, to something higher, and so on and on and on. He was not ignorant of the sentiment expressed by Browning in *The Inn Album*:

“Better have failed in the high aim, as I,
Than vulgarly in the low aim succeed,”

nor of Pope’s epigrammatic line:

“Not failure, but low aim is crime,”

but he believed that a low aim might be as worthy as a high one, and that he who would reach the high peaks of excellence should aim first to ascend the foothills, leaving in temporary abeyance the question of climbing the greater heights. His happiness was in the present and in constant upward progress. His felicity was not contingent on ascending “Fame’s ladder” to a given height. His favorite passages touching this question were those from Chaucer (*The Frankeleins Prologue*):

“Truth is the highest thing that man may keep,”

and Longfellow (*The Ladder of St. Augustine*):

“ we have feet to scale and climb
By *slow degrees*, by *more and more*,
The cloudy summits of our time.”

Stockley made a wise selection in choosing his first pedagogical reading.

“A guardian angel o’er his life presiding”¹ guided him to Page’s *Theory and Practice of Teach-*

¹Samuel Rogers—*Human Life*.

ing. From this work, which pulsated with the life blood of a true teacher, there came to him an inspiration which remained with him to the end of his pedagogical career. This was followed by a book on *School Management*, another on *Methods of Teaching*, and still another on *Psychology as Applied in Teaching*.

Rutledge Stockley's mind tended to the practical. When he read anything that referred to his work as a teacher, he asked himself, "Does that apply to *my* work?" and "How can I make that precept apply in *my school*?" He rejected or deferred the application of some principles as not adapted to his conditions, and those which seemed to him applicable he modified so as to fit them for use in his school. The words WHY and HOW presented themselves in capital letters on every page of his professional reading. A work on Method, for example, stated that "The most effective work can be done with a class only when each member is attentive to the matter in hand." "Why is it," he asked himself, "that Attention is a basis for all effective work?" When that question had been satisfactorily answered, the next one arose: "How can I secure Maude Clarke's and Mary Milligan's attention in the geography class?" He worked the problem out in his own room at the Excelsior Hotel, and tested his conclusions in the geography class the very next day, altering them, when necessary, to suit the nature of Maude Clarke and Mary Milligan.

Stockley had seen in his educational paper an account of how Visitors Day had been observed in the rural schools of some county, and he determined to try how a Visitors Day would work in Green Valley.

Wednesday, November 7, was the day he selected. On Tuesday of the preceding week, he announced his plan to the pupils.

"Please invite your parents," he said to them just before closing school, "to come Wednesday afternoon of next week, and see how you are progressing in your studies. We will begin at half-past one that afternoon, instead of one o'clock, so as to give them all an opportunity to be here when we begin work."

He noticed that Fannie Vose had her hand raised.

"Well, Fannie?"

"Won't there be any speaking or reading or anything?"

"No, we will do only regular school work. I shall change the program so as to have Arithmetic and Grammar come in the afternoon, with Geography and Reading, and the exercises will wind up with a spelling contest. We will make further arrangements about it, but I'll tell you this now—and I wish you would let your parents know about it—there will be no special drill on particular examples or pages or words or maps. I want your friends to see just what we are trying to do. If we fail before them we will try to work so as not to fail next time. But we are not going to fail—are we?"

A general pressing-together of lips and shaking of heads was sufficient negative.

"Our recitations next Wednesday," continued the teacher, "will be either on the regular lesson assigned for the day or on what we have gone over this term. You may prepare as much as you wish by reviewing all the lessons we have had this term, but I don't know

yet what work I shall give you on Visitors Day, and I may not know until the time comes. Of course, we want to make the best showing we can that afternoon, but there will be no secret preparation, and you are at liberty to tell your parents and friends anything I have said to you about it."

By night the next day, Visitors Day was a common topic of conversation. The *Green Valley Argus* announced it, and by the time of opening on the afternoon of the designated day, all the seats, including a large number of chairs that had been brought in for the occasion, were filled. Many of the mothers of the children and a few of their fathers were in the chairs. Quite a number of them had never before visited the school. Mr. Dow, Mr. Dundonald, and Squire Green, the members of the school board, occupied seats on the platform. At exactly half past one, the teacher tapped the bell, and the roll call began. Charlie Loring entered the room just after his number had been placed on the blackboard. He had not been late before in that term. His number was placed on the board and a figure 1 was written at the left of it to show that he was tardy one minute and not absent for the half-day.

"Mr. Stockley," said Mr. Dow in a courteous manner but with the ring of authority in his tone, "Charlie Loring ought not to be counted tardy; he was here before the end of roll-call." Stockley bowed slightly but made no reply.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Stockley, at the conclusion of roll-call, "our exercises this afternoon will represent the regular work of the school. The only deviation from our usual program is the omission of

some of our afternoon work and the substitution of one or two recitations that usually come in the forenoon. I am glad so many of you are here, and I shall try to show you what your children are doing in their everyday school work. I will not occupy your time with any further explanation. The grammar class." The members of the class rose and quietly moved forward to the recitation seats.

The teacher asked, in quick succession, a number of questions in review, calling for definitions, rules for the formation of plurals and possessives and for the comparison of adjectives and adverbs, rules of syntax, etc. This consumed most of the time allowed to grammar. He then requested that some member of the board would select a passage for parsing and analysis. After a little delay, Mr. Dow selected from the grammar these sentences:

"Fitz James saw the panther in the tree."

and

"To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride posthaste."

Stockley wrote the sentences on the blackboard where all in the class could see them.

"Maude Clarke may begin the analysis."

Maude rose.

"'Fitz James saw the panther in the tree' is a simple declarative sentence," she began. "The subject is *Fitz James*; the predicate is *saw the panther in the tree*."

"Eva Black may continue the analysis," interrupted the teacher.

"I want to hear how Maude would dispose of the rest of the sentence," broke in Mr. Dow.

Stockley was a little nettled. He had called on a different pupil because that was his usual way of doing, and he wanted to show the everyday work of the school. It seemed to him, besides, that it would have been a matter of ordinary courtesy for the director to express his wish in the form of a request and address it to him, the teacher. He wished to be courteous to the visitor and to avoid offending the director. At the same time he was determined to retain in his own hands the direction of the recitation. His reserve of wit came to his aid, and, turning to the director, he politely said, "Certainly, Mr. Dow, Maude shall have an opportunity a little later. Go on, Eva," he continued, turning to the class.

Mr. Dow's face flushed slightly, but he said no more, and Eva began:

"The predicate verb is *saw* and it has the noun *panther* for its object. *Saw* is modified by the adverbial phrase *in the tree*." Here, Eva took her seat.

"Do all agree to the analysis as it has been given?" asked the teacher.

One of the boys, Charlie Marfield, looked up with a half smile of doubt, and hesitatingly asked, "Doesn't the phrase *in the tree* modify the noun *panther*?"

Mr. Dow's lips parted as if he were about to speak, but he checked himself as Stockley replied, "I can't answer that question for you; does it seem to *you* to modify the meaning of the verb *saw* or of the noun *panther*?"

"I think it modifies *panther*," said Charlie. At this, several hands were raised.

"Let everyone read the sentence carefully and try to get the exact meaning of it and of every element in

it. Either Charlie or Eva is wrong. Everybody is liable to error, and both of you, I believe, would rather learn something new by owning up frankly to a mistake than hold onto an error by refusing to acknowledge it. Wouldn't you, Charlie?"

"Yes, sir, I would," said Charlie.

"Wouldn't you, Eva?"

"O, I don't know,—perhaps so," said Eva. There was a general laugh.

"Now," said the teacher, "we cannot decide this question by a majority vote, but I want all who have any opinion to commit themselves. You may all rise."

The class rose.

"All who see in the phrase *in the tree* a modifier of *panther* may be seated."

Seven of the eleven pupils in the class took their seats.

"Those who see in it a modifier of *saw* may be seated."

Three more took their seats and Eva Black alone remained standing.

"How do you see it now, Eva?" asked Stockley.

"I'm all mixed up over it," she replied, "and I don't know *what* it modifies." This was said with a saucy but not impudent twinkle of the eye, and again there was a laugh in which the master joined.

"I am very glad you have the courage to say you don't know," said he. "You are in just the right condition to learn. Maude," he continued, "Mr. Dow wishes to hear your opinion. Please state what you think the phrase modifies, giving your reason."

"The phrase *in the tree* tells *where* he *saw* some-

thing," said Maude, "so it modifies *saw*, which is a verb, and anything that modifies a verb is an adverb. That's why I think *in the tree* is an adverbial phrase."

"You're right, Maude," volunteered Mr. Dow. "All authorities agree on that. Now take the other sentence."

"One moment," said the teacher. "I have a book in my desk that contains the passage from which the first sentence is taken. If I read the entire sentence, we may get additional light."

Having found the place in the book, he read, " 'Both hunters were prone upon the ground; Fitz James saw the panther in the tree, but the panther on the ground was concealed by the underbrush.' Let me ask three questions for you to think about. You may give me your answers tomorrow. I have my opinion as to what *in the tree* modifies, but I will reserve it until tomorrow because I wish you to decide according to the meaning as you understand it, without being influenced by me. Now for the three questions:

"What does *on the ground* modify?

"Do the two phrases modify the same kind or different kinds of words?

"What do you finally conclude that *in the tree* modifies?

"We have only a few moments for the next sentence,—just time for considering one element. What is the construction of *across the waste*? You may rise when your answer is ready."

In a short time, every pupil had risen.

"Isaac Dexter," said Stockley.

Isaac promptly answered, "*Across the waste* modi-

fies the verb *die*, and it is therefore an adverbial phrase."

"How many agree with Isaac?"

Every hand was raised.

"You are all wrong," Stockley dared to say, although he had heard an exclamation of approval from Mr. Dow when Isaac's answer was given. "In this case there is no room for difference of opinion. The comma sets off the first phrase from the one we are discussing. The mark of punctuation would not have been inserted to separate a modifier from the word it modifies. The meaning is not *die across the waste*, but *ride across the waste*. This is a case in which the grammatical construction is placed absolutely beyond doubt by the use of a comma. The phrase *across the waste*, by poetic license, is made to precede its verb, instead of follow it according to the usual arrangement. This transposition obscures the meaning at first sight." As the teacher spoke, those pupils who had taken the opposite view nodded their heads, one after another; thus showing that they had changed their view.

The grammar class was then dismissed and the arithmetic class was called.

When Stockley turned to take an arithmetic from his desk, he discovered the county superintendent, Mr. Harkins, who had quietly entered the room about the time when the class began the analysis of the two sentences.

The arithmetic lesson was a review of fractions. There were both easy and difficult problems to solve, and, in the main, the pupils acquitted themselves with

credit. The characteristic features of their work were the explanation of the problems in such a manner as to indicate an acquaintance with the fundamental truths on which the computations were based, and the accuracy of the calculations.

The teacher had remembered, and his pupils had profited by, Superintendent Harkins's statement that the right study of arithmetic tends to cultivate exactness and precision.

The geography class drew the "grand divisions" on the blackboard: Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas being sketched free-hand by different members of the class.

The reading of the fifth reader class presented little that was remarkable. The teacher had followed a definite plan in teaching the class and had set up an ideal toward which he was laboriously threading his way, satisfied if, at a month's end, he could see that the pupils read more distinctly and with some improvement in expression. He made no apology or explanation to the audience, but called the spelling class.

"Let them choose sides and spell down," said Mr. Dow, in a tone that was more than half dictatorial.

"Certainly," said Stockley, suppressing his irritation at the director's unwarranted assumption of authority, "we sometimes do that; Allie Harley, will you choose on this side, and Charlie Marfield, will you choose on this?"

Allie and Charlie took their places, and in a short time all the pupils in the room stood facing one another in two lines, the best spellers, of course, being near the "head," next to the choosers.

Before beginning the spelling exercises, the teacher explained his method of conducting a class in oral spelling.

"I will not consume the time," he said, "by giving reasons for our plan, which is this:

"I pronounce a word once, and only once, giving it as distinctly as possible;

"Words are to be spelled in a way that will indicate their proper division into syllables;

"If a word is incorrectly pronounced or spelled, I at once say *wrong*, and the pupil 'goes down.' The word is never passed to 'next.'

"Only one trial is given to a word.

"If I pronounce a word *missed* and the speller thinks he was correct, the question is referred to the head of the opposite side, and his decision is final.

"Our plan is a little different when all stand in one line. Then, the best spellers 'go up' toward the head, and those who miss remain in the class."

The exercises then began. The first one to "go down" was Jimmy Stone, who failed on *conduit*. Jane Heth was offered *confectionery* but preferred *confectionary*, which the master would not allow; Millicent Risley might have remained *stationary* if *stationery* had not had greater attraction for her; and *fatal* gave a fatal blow to the orthographical aspirations of Charlie Loring.

In seven minutes there were only four standing on Allie Harley's side and three on Charlie Marfield's.

"Before going further," said Stockley, addressing the survivors, "let us recall the principle we have adopted: 'We can better afford defeat than loss of

trust in ourselves as persons of honor and truth; the heads of these sides may be called on to decide for or against themselves."

He then recommenced "putting out" words. *Myrrh*, *vies*, *vise*, and *knurly* were correctly spelled, and the word *supersede* came to Lura Fuller.

Lura was confident and spelled rapidly. "Su per sede: s u—p e r—c e d e." So the teacher understood her.

"Wrong," he announced.

"I think I was right," said Lura.

"How did you spell the word?"

"Su per sede: s u-p e r-s e d e."

"Did you understand her so, Charlie?" addressing the head of the opposite side.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"I was wrong," said the teacher, "I understood you to begin the last syllable with *c*."

There was no further error until Eva Black turned *e* out of the last syllable of superintendent filling the vacancy with *a*, and was pronounced "wrong."

"What is the right spelling?" asked Eva.

Stockley told her, and she tacitly acknowledged her error by taking her seat without protest.

By this time, interest in the contest was intense. Heads were tilted forward; necks were craned toward the teacher and toward the pupils alternately; hands were concaved and placed behind ears as sounding boards; every pupil's as well as every visitor's eye was eager.

The teacher was about to pronounce the next word when Mr. Dow's voice was heard.

"Mr. Stockley," said he, "I think quite a number of these scholars have spelled down because they didn't understand the words. Suppose you let some one else pronounce words."

Mr. Dow's proposition was not prompted by any ill will to Stockley. He liked the schoolmaster, notwithstanding the hint the latter had given him to mind his own business. He was willing and even anxious to have Stockley acquit himself creditably, but his dominant desire was to bring H. L. Dow into prominence as the main pillar of the Green Valley school. He was very desirous that the school should be a success that year because its success would reflect credit on the school officer who was instrumental in securing the services of so promising a principal as the present one.

"I shall be much pleased," was Stockley's reply, "to accept your suggestion. Will you not do me the favor of taking my place for the rest of the time?"

This was just what Mr. Dow had had in view in proposing a change of pronouncers. He stepped forward and took the spelling book.

"Va' ga ry," he pronounced, looking at Allie Harley.

Allie looked a little confused and turned her eyes to the teacher, who only smiled in return. She proceeded: "Va ga' ry: V a—g a—r y."

"Wrong," said Mr. Dow. "You spelled it right but your pronunciation was wrong."

"I *think* I was right," said Allie, timidly, for it was the banker and school director with whom she was

taking issue. She looked across to Charlie Marfield for he was, under the rules, the one to decide.

"We'll consult the dictionary," said Mr. Dow. Finding the word in the unabridged, he looked at it with care; bent nearer and examined it closely; turned a leaf as if he expected to find on another page some way out of the trouble; looked back at the word; and finally looked up and asked Allie, "Where did you put the accent?"

"On the second syllable."

"Well," he slowly admitted, "that's the way it seems to be in the dictionary, but I think there's some mistake about it, for I never heard it that way. But we won't call it wrong, Allie," he kindly added.

"H̄y po chon' dri ac," he pronounced to Charlie Marfield.

"H̄yp o chon' dri ac," corrected Charlie, and spelled the word.

While the next few words were being spelled the pronouncer sauntered carelessly to the dictionary and opened it in an abstracted manner to the page containing words which begin with *Hypochon* . . . He soon closed the dictionary without comment on what he had discovered, and a quiet smile went round the room.

When he passed the word "dis put' a ble" to Isaac Dexter and Isaac passed it back as being dis' pu ta ble, one of the visitors, Harry Dole, tittered.

"How do you pronounce dispute?" Mr. Dow demanded of Charlie.

"Dis puté," was the reply.

"Then isn't disputable dis put' a ble?"

"I think not," said Charlie.

"*I think it is*; we'll see."

When Mr. Dow slammed the dictionary shut, after investigation, there were three giggles from as many girls (visitors) who formed a group in one corner. The pupils would have laughed if they had not been discouraged by repressive glances from the teacher's eyes. Mr. Dow learned the pronunciation of several other doubtful words, and, on the whole, took his lesson good naturedly, but he shut the spelling with alacrity at the close of the period.

In response to the principal's invitation he made a short address, in which he commended the work of the school as shown on Visitors Day, gave some good advice to the pupils, and referred humorously to his own attempt to play the schoolmaster.

"We are fortunate in having our county superintendent present," said Stockley, "and I hope he will favor us with a few remarks."

Superintendent Harkins came forward slowly, with his head bent as if thinking how he should begin. Having reached the front of the platform, he looked up. The oscillation of his head was only momentary, being arrested by a faint, jerky movement which gave it the quotation tilt.

"There is much," he began, "which I am impelled to say to express my appreciation of the excellent showing made by the pupils of the Green Valley school, today,—a showing which has been made possible by the learning, the ability, and the skill of your teacher. But I am restrained by a consideration which is aptly expressed by the incomparable Homer in the

tenth book of the Iliad, and which Alexander Pope renders in these lines:

'Praise from a friend or censure from a foe,
Are lost on hearers that our merits know.'

I am your teacher's friend; you all know his merits; and praise from me 'would, consequently, be a mere superflux. The poet Cowper in *The Task*, alludes to

'Those golden times
And those Arcadian scenes that Maro sings.'

These, my friends, are better than 'golden times'; they are times of learning, of achievement, and of improved pedagogical methods. No longer is the youthful learner seen:

'Creeping, like snail, unwillingly to school,'
where an efferous master lies in wait to birken him with birchen rod. Every cogitabund individual rejoices that pedagogic ferocity is passing into desuetude. To the benevolous people of our time the school methods of the sixteenth century would be cataphysical and abhorrent.

Yours, my young friends, is a happy lot. All things favor you. Golden opportunity is yours but you should bear in mind the precept of which the elder Pliny reminds us, that opportunities lost can never be regained. Let me, in conclusion, commend to you a precept found in Samuel Johnson's ode on Winter:

'Catch, then, oh catch the transient hour;

Improve each moment as it flies!
Life's a soft summer, man a flower;
He dies—alas! how soon he dies.'"

He took his seat, and the teacher, after expressing his hope that another Visitors 'Day would show improvement in the school, dismissed the pupils and the visitors dispersed.

CHAPTER V

THE STONE QUARRY

Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous.—*Shakespeare.*

When Arthur Blazer appeared on the main street of Green Valley about ten o'clock in the forenoon of the day following his ejection from the schoolroom, he found himself running a gauntlet of derisive smiles and bantering jokes.

"Hullo, Arthur," called out Harry Dole from the doorway of John McMillan's hardware store. "Ain't ye a little late for school? Ef ye hurry along, p'r'aps ye'll git there'n time fur the g'ogerfy class,—he, he, he!"

The bystanders joined in the laugh.

"You shut up!" growled Arthur as he passed on in front of Dan Loring's grocery. Here he encountered another group of which Garry Leroy was the spokesman.

"Say, Art," laughed Garry, "bound Africa for us. I understand you bounded good and strong, yesterday, when the schoolmaster had hold of your coat collar!"

A loud guffaw from the crowd greeted Garry's witticism, and Arthur hurried along only to encounter Hank Medart, the burly proprietor of "Medart's Saloon."

"You fellers let Art alone," shouted Medart. "The perfesser gin it to 'im plenty 'thout you pickin'

on 'im. It's a darn shame fer a great hulkin' hunderd pound ruffin like Stockley to jump onto a puny little hunderd 'nd eighty pound boy like you be! Say, y'orter git yer sister to go'n pound th' yeverlastin' gizzard out 'f 'im!"

"You fellers can all go to ——," snapped the badgered boy, now thoroly enraged and overwhelmed with mortification. He lumbered around the corner at a quickened gait and sought a less frequented street.

His life was a burden to him that day. He was kept continually dodging across the street and behind buildings to avoid meeting persons who would be sure to "guy" him. Even grave citizens appeared to look sideways at him with an amused smile as they passed him. Ladies glanced at him furtively, and his sensitive ear caught fragments of their audible whisperings:

".....threw him out....."

".....Stockley....."

".....geography class....."

".....served him right....."

When he went home to his dinner at noon, he was surly and irritable. In the afternoon he remained about the house, dreading ridicule if he should venture upon the street. His solitude was as much of a strain upon him as the jeering and derision of the streets. He resisted all attempts of his parents and brothers to draw him into conversation on the subject of what he regarded as an ignominious defeat. He had been the school bully; he was now a butt of scoffing to the little boys and girls. He had been cock

of the walk; he was now a plucked and bedraggled fowl.

He went to the cow barn and climbed to the hay loft where he could be alone. As he brooded over his disgrace, a feeling of fierce resentment took possession of him. "Who done this?" he muttered without articulating the words, "who do I owe for this?" As the questions took form in his mind, his wrath gathered force. He half rose from his bed on the hay and shook his fist in the direction of the schoolhouse. "You, by——! you! you! you! and by—— I'll git even with you!" He subsided upon the hay and lost himself in as deep thought as was possible in the turbid condition of his uncultivated brain. In half an hour he rose with a more settled look in his face. When he appeared at the supper table he seemed almost cheerful and took his accustomed share in the family conversation.

The next morning he announced to his father his intention of "looking for a job," for he was not lazy, and work was vastly more attractive to him than idling about home or the village. In three days he had secured work as a section hand on the railroad. Every day thereafter he accompanied the section boss and other hands with their hand car on their working and inspection trips over the section, often taking his noon luncheon with him from home.

About a week after his work on the railroad began, the section crew lunched at a stone quarry to which a spur track had been built from the main line. This quarry was situated about two miles from the village. After finishing his luncheon, Arthur strolled about

the quarry, looking idly at the derricks, the piles of rock, the heaps of broken stone, and the various objects connected with quarrying which appealed to his curiosity. A row of vertical holes sunk in a shelf of rock arrested his attention.

"What's them holes for?" he asked of a quarryman.

"They're holes for blasting."

"How d'ye blast with them holes?"

"We put blasting powder into them, then fill up the hole with sand and clay, and then touch it off."

"How can ye touch off the powder when it's all covered up with sand 'n' clay?"

"Why, we use a fuse."

"What's a fuse?"

"See here!" said the quarryman, "you're firing questions at me like I was a witness in a 'salt 'n' battery trial. What do you want to know so much for?"

"O, nothin'," replied Arthur, "I was kind o' curis, that's all." He started to walk away, but turned back.

"Say," he began again, "that blastin' powder must be allfired strong to break off them big rocks."

"Yes, it's pretty strong."

Arthur again walked slowly away for he saw the other section men placing their lunch pails on the hand car. The quarrymen had recommenced drilling the holes that had excited the young man's curiosity and he turned several times to watch their work. All that afternoon he seemed abstracted. In every interval of work he fell into a brown study. Two or three times when all the men were expected to lift or pull

together, the section boss had to speak sharply to bring him back from his woolgathering.

"Say, look here," said the boss at last, "what's the matter of ye? Be ye sick or anythin'?"

"No, I ain't sick; I was jest thinkin' what if Number 3 should go thru that bridge over Lumber Crick."

He roused himself and became more attentive to his work but his companions noticed that his eyes had a far-away look and that he several times half closed them and nodded his head as if he had reached some conclusion.

The next day the section crew was again at the quarry. This time, Arthur sought out the foreman and asked for a job. A laborer was needed to assist in loading cars with stone. The foreman was pleased with the young man's muscular build and arranged with him to begin work as soon as he could get his "time" from the railroad. In two days, Arthur Blazer had developed out of the section hand and into the quarryman stage of existence. He generally walked to his work in the morning, but he sometimes caught a ride on the engine that ran out to do switching at the quarry. He was little given to conversation with the other laborers but he did not withdraw himself from them at lunch time. While munching his corned beef and bread, his eye would sometimes run over the scraps of paper his luncheon was wrapped in, resting on accounts of accidents and crimes. One day he read about the wreck of the ocean steamer Bristol and the loss of eighty-four passengers. Another time he became interested in the escape of a murderer from Minneapolis, where the crime of which the fugitive was

accused had been committed,—his special interest being due to the fact that the fugitive had thick, red hair, like himself, that his size and build were like his own, and that reports showed him to be heading for the heavily wooded swamp that bordered Run River, not far from Green Valley. The pursuit, capture, and hanging of two notorious horse-thieves by a posse of Wyoming cowboys was the literary delicacy on which he feasted the next day. One of his co-laborers ventured once to hint remotely at Blazer's trouble in school, but the danger signal in the ex-bully's eyes checked him, and the experiment was never repeated.

Notwithstanding the aversion to study which Arthur had always exhibited in school, he now became a diligent student of everything pertaining to his new line of industry, and particularly of the process of blasting. Without apparent eagerness to learn about it, he asked many questions from time to time and in this way he laid up a store of information regarding drills and drilling, kinds of powder used, the adjustment of time in the use of time fuses, etc. The foreman praised him moderately for his faithful work and advised him to learn the trade of quarrying. Blazer received the praise stolidly, making little reply. He seldom mentioned his work at home. He had become an habitual smoker but he had never been a frequenter of saloons. His father noted with satisfaction Arthur's steady devotion to his work, and a conversation with the foreman of the quarry led him to believe that his son had found an employment that, should it prove to be permanent, would result in industrious habits and a reputable life.

One evening when Arthur left the house after supper—it was only after dark that he now ventured upon the street—he asked his mother to loan him her pocket Bible. She gladly let him take the book and ventured to express the hope that he would read it carefully and that it would be a means of doing him good. The boy made no reply, but slipped the book into his pocket and went out. He soon met James Wakely.

“Hello, Jim,” said Arthur.

“Hello, Art.”

“Say, Jim, I want to talk with ye.”

“All right,” replied Jim. He went with Arthur around a corner out of the light of the stores and saloons. A walk of two blocks brought them to the river bank, remote from any building. Neither boy had spoken during the walk, for Arthur had become habitually taciturn, and James felt, in the presence of his stronger companion, a certain timidity which deterred him from taking the lead in conversation. When they were seated on a boulder by the river, Arthur spoke, after looking about carefully to assure himself that they were quite alone.

“How ye gittin’ along in school now days?”

“Pretty well,—why?”

“What made ye go back on me that day?” asked Arthur, ignoring Jim’s question.

“Why, Art,” whined James, “I didn’t have any chance. It wouldn’t been any use for me to light on him after you’d left the room.” James carefully avoided any hint that Arthur had been thrown out.

“All right; I ain’t kickin’. I s’pose yer boss makes

ye stand 'round pretty lively, don't he? You come when he whistles 'n' jump when he hollers?"

"No, I don't; I do just as I please; I'm not his nigger."

"Ye're gittin' to like 'im first rate, ain't ye? To hear Clint talk" (Clinton was a younger brother of Arthur's, who remained in school.) "ye'd think all the girls was in love with 'im 'nd all the boys was ready to black 'is boots."

James had really conceived a liking for his teacher but he lacked courage to acknowledge it in the face of Arthur's taunts. Moreover, Arthur's bold nature dominated the weaker one and James now began to think he had been too compliant in yielding to the spirit of good order which pervaded Mr. Stockley's schoolroom. He therefore spoke no word of defense for his teacher in reply to Arthur's sneers.

"Now you just look here, Mr. James Wakely," said Arthur with energy, turning towards James and emphasizing his words by vicious blows of his right fist upon his left palm, "ef you're yer mamma's pet darlin' little Sunday School scholar, and don't dare to say anythin' above a whisper fer fear Stockley'll hear of it 'n' give ye a lickin', why then that's all I've got to say to *you*, Mr. Wakely." He started as if to rise.

"Hold on, Art," James hastened to say; "what is it you want, anyway?"

"I wont t'know, fust off, ef you're a goin' to go and blab to anybody 'bout our talkin' together."

"No, I ain't."

"Now, I wan' t'know whether ye've got the sperit of a baby rabbit, when a stinkin' little dude jumps on

ye 'n tries to skin ye 'live!"

"Of course I have," answered James, straightening himself up and trying to look valiant. His answer was very nearly true.

"D'ye mean what ye say, or be ye goin' to play the baby act when that teacher o' yourn begins to talk soft to ye?"

"Why, of course I mean just what I say; I'm not a blabber."

"Ef ye mean business ye jes' 's soon take an oath not to tell anythin' I say to ye. Now, what I want to know is, *be—you—GAME?*"

This was proposing a step a little beyond what James was really willing to take, but he could hardly refuse to back up what he had so emphatically asserted. He therefore signified his willingness to bind himself by an oath, not to reveal anything Arthur might communicate to him.

"Stand up!" commanded Arthur.

James stood up.

"Take off yer hat!"

James removed his hat.

"Raise up yer right hand!"

James obeyed.

"Drop yer hat 'n take holt o' this bible with yer left hand!"

James complied, after hesitating a moment and glancing at Arthur's stern countenance.

"Say 'I' ". It was done.

"Repeat your full name." James repeated it in a low tone, and with a slight quaver in his voice.

"Now, say these words after me and don't you skip a single —— word."

Arthur then administered to the trembling boy before him an oath modeled on a form such as he had heard was employed in some secret society, but containing several imprecations of his own invention and sundry allusions to coffins, graves, torn livers and bloody daggers which no freemason or odd fellow had ever dreamed of. When James had pronounced the final imprecation calling down upon himself awful penalties if he should ever tell about his meetings with Arthur, he was shaking as if in an ague fit and it was with bloodless lips that he obeyed Arthur's solemn command, "James Morgan Wakely, kiss the holy bible!"

"Now, Jim," said Arthur at the conclusion of the ceremony, "I ain't got nothin' more to say to ye to-night. I'll let ye know when I want ye again, and don't you fergit that I have a way of knowin' ef ye ever break yer oath."

James slept very little that night, and both his teacher and his parents noticed frequently thereafter that an absent-minded look would come over him in the midst of his study, his play, and his work.

CHAPTER VI

A MODERN INQUISITION

We will answer all things faithfully.—*Shakespeare.*

It would not have been difficult for Rutledge Stockley to establish himself as a social lion in Green Valley. He was intelligent and courteous, a good singer and a good story-teller. He possessed an art that is exceedingly rare in both polite and impolite society,—the art of listening, and the practice of this art endeared him to long-winded old men and garrulous old ladies. He never, in society, spoke in deprecatory terms of anyone, nor did he make the affairs of the school a topic of common conversation in parlors, in stores, or on the street. He attended church sociables and other social functions, and even went occasionally to a dancing party held at G. A. R. Hall.

He frequently met Mr. and Mrs. Dow at social gatherings, and as they were both singers his own musical talent tended to a closer relationship with them than would have existed were it not that the subtle centripetence of "Music's golden tongue" drew them together.

One evening when Mr. Dow was reading his paper in the sitting room, his wife addressed him on a subject she had been revolving in her mind for several days.

"Dow," she said. She never called him Hiram, or Mr. Dow. Her husband looked up.

"I've been thinking about having Stockley come and

live with us." Mrs. Dow never took the trouble to construct conversational approaches to any subject she wished to introduce to her husband's attention. She always came directly to the point, which she expected to carry and which she never failed to carry, without the trouble and delay of a regular siege. She was willing to consult him on domestic questions,—so much she conceded to convention, but it was tacitly understood by both partners in this connubial firm, that any proposition advanced by its petticoat member was as secure against veto as an act of the British House of Commons. It was in harmony with Mrs. Dow's nature to speak of *having* instead of *asking* the teacher to become an inmate of her house, and she could never have plebeianized her household by having any one *board* there.

"It seems to me, Mary," replied Mr. Dow, "that we are quite comfortable as we are. Gran'ma and Winnie are good company, and a family of four is large enough for comfort."

"Yes," assented Mrs. Dow, "mother and Win are all right, and it isn't because I'm dying for Stockley's society that I want him to come. I want him here on your account."

"On my account! I don't see how his being here would do me any good."

"Dow," said his wife, "you ought to be the real director on that school board,—now you're only *called* director. You ought to be the director of the school. You know very well that you're not. Stockley sets himself up to be director, and he takes good care to let everyone know it. See how he just sat down on you on

that 'Visitors Day.' You couldn't say a thing without his snubbing you, just to let everybody know that he couldn't be bossed by you."

"But I don't see, Mary, how all that has anything to do with Mr. Stockley's coming here to board."

"It has just this to do with it," explained Mrs. Dow: "if Stockley comes here you'll have more chances to talk with him and your talks will come about more naturally. You won't seem to be trying to get control over him as you would if you had to look him up at the hotel or ask him into the back office at the bank every time you want to see him. Besides, if he was here, we would treat him particularly well, and he would feel under obligations to do as you ask him to. He would think twice before he tried to put you down in public as he did at the schoolhouse the other day."

Mr. Dow laughed as he recalled his part in the events of Visitors Day. "Mr. Stockley," he said, "was entirely within his rights, in conducting his own classes in his own manner, and I don't feel hard toward him for letting me know my place. He was very gentlemanly about it. Still, there is something in your suggestion. Stockley is young; he has had very little experience; and he needs advice from some level-headed person."

"Can't you speak to Stockley some time tomorrow about it?" asked Mrs. Dow.

"I think so. When do you want him to come?"

"He can come any time,—tomorrow, if he wants to."

"Very well, I'll speak to him tomorrow."

The next day Mr. Dow introduced the subject to the teacher, suggesting that altho the Excelsior Hotel

was an excellent house, the surroundings could hardly be as agreeable as those of a private family. His own home, he added, was pleasantly situated and quiet, and in view of Stockley's uncongenial associations at the hotel, it would give Mrs. Dow and himself pleasure to have him make his home with them. He named a price for board, which, while a little less than he had been paying at the hotel, was high enough to make Stockley feel that he would not be a charity boarder.

Stockley had been by no means dissatisfied with the hotel, but the plan of living in a family of a leading citizen was attractive to him, and before long he was installed in the banker's home.

Mrs. Dow had not mentioned to her husband the principal consideration that led to her desire to have the principal in her family. She cared for the distinction that would come from having her husband known as prominent or supreme in local political and educational affairs, but she cared vastly more for recognition of herself as the leader of the highest and most exclusive social set in the community. Wealth was one qualification, but not the only one for membership in this set. Stockley's intellectual acumen and his possession of what Green Valley society called "culture" had opened the doors of the "best society" to him. Mary Dow believed that if the new social lion would submit to wearing her collar and allow himself to be led about by her chain, the end of her own ambition would, thereby, be more certainly attainable.

Since Visitors Day some rumors had reached Stockley's ears concerning dissatisfaction on the part

of patrons of the school. One afternoon he called at the bank to tell Mr. Dow that the school needed a supply of crayon. He found the banker alone in his private office. After attending to the matter of business, he determined that he would ascertain from the director, if possible, what foundation there was for the rumors he had heard.

"Mr. Dow," he said, "I have heard remarks here and there, that seem to indicate dissatisfaction with the school. I have made little or no reply to those who have repeated these things to me, but I come to you as a friend, hoping that if you know of anything wrong you will tell me frankly, so that I may apply the remedy."

"I'm not sorry you came to me," replied Mr. Dow, "altho I believe that the best way to treat false reports about the school or stories which show ignorance of your methods and aims is to pay no attention to them until they are brought to your notice by some person of standing in the community."

"If I wait for that," said Stockley, "I may never have an opportunity to set myself right."

"Never fear; keep your own counsel; examine your own record honestly, as if you were investigating the conduct of another person; if you find your ship has sprung a leak, run it into dry dock and repair it. Don't make the mistake of taking offense when you are criticised. If I were talking to one of the village censors, I would caution him to be absolutely certain of his facts before saying anything, and then to say very little. But we are looking at your side now. Every active member of any community is exposed to criticism.

However reluctant one may be, through self-conceit, to admit it, it is, nevertheless, true, that when one's acts are called in question, there is as great probability of his being wrong, as there is of his critic's being in error. Perhaps it is better to say that whenever a criticism is made, there is ground for it, though the ground may be untenable. It is wise for the object of the criticism to examine his position and see whether he is, himself, on tenable ground. If his ground is not tenable, he should shift his position. When any fair-minded person tells you of anything for which you are censured, tell him the absolute truth; explain, if necessary, the reasons for your action. The truth will then begin to spread just as the error did, if, indeed, there was an error. Truth is a ferret; it drives lies out of their holes into the light, and the light kills them."

"I can see the force of what you say," said Stockley, "and if my management of the school is open to criticism—as it must be when I have had so little experience—I want to set it right. Have you heard any fault found?"

"Yes; several people think you ought not to have left that question undecided in the grammar class on Visitors Day, and some of them profess to think you left it over so that you could look it up yourself before committing yourself and running the risk of exposing your ignorance."

Stockley's face flushed. "The stupid fools—" were the words which formed themselves in his mind, but, in the exercise of the disposition he had cultivated to look at both sides, he stifled his first thought and, after a moment's hesitation, said something quite different.

"I can easily see," he said, "how that inference might fairly be made. The truth is, however, that there was absolutely no question in my mind as to the proper disposition of the phrase under discussion. There was no room for opinion, because opinion is less than knowledge, and I *knew*. Now, why didn't I *tell* the pupils what I knew, as they were there to *learn*? It was simply because a mere knowledge of the fact we were searching for would have been utterly worthless to them. To know, on the authority of a teacher, that the phrase *in the tree* modifies a certain element in a sentence would not fit the pupils to be better citizens or housewives. But, on the other hand, to form the habit of analyzing the language in which other people express their thoughts has, it seems to me, a very important bearing on their value as citizens. Is it not because of inability to perform such analysis that the ignorant are so often made the dupes of the smooth-tongued? I will go still further, Mr. Dow, and ask whether to tell a child a fact connected with his studies which he may reasonably be expected to discover for himself is not positively injurious to him. Does it not encourage his tendency to rely on other people to form his opinions for him—a tendency which, if unchecked, must result in failure to our experiment of government by the people? By thinking out independently the relation in question, the pupils placed themselves in the line of thought development which would be of service to them, it seemed to me, in business, in society, in every activity of life."

Mr. Dow smiled. "Your explanation would hardly be intelligible," he said, "to the person who reported to

me what people are saying on this point, but I think most intelligent people would understand."

"What other criticism have you heard?" asked Stockley.

"Well, you know Arthur Wildon, who runs the lumber yard?"

"Yes, I have met him."

"Well, he thinks that you have the boys go too much into the explanation of their examples in arithmetic. He doesn't see the use of having them give or even trying to have them understand the reason for everything they do. They ought to learn to reckon rapidly and without making mistakes. That's Wildon's notion, and I don't believe," added Mr. Dow, "he's altogether wrong."

"Nor do I," assented the teacher. "I have read that one very important use of arithmetic study is to cultivate the power of rapid and accurate computation, and that it has a high value for training the mind to reason from step to step in a series of dependent propositions, but perhaps I need to emphasize more the other phase of number drill."

"Seems to me," remarked Mr. Dow, "that you show considerable familiarity with pedagogical principles for one who has never taught school before. Where did you pick up so much professional knowledge? I think you told me you had never attended a normal school?"

"I'm glad I do not appear entirely ignorant. No, I have had no professional training. I hope to remedy this defect if I remain in the work. But I have already read a few professional books,—one on Theory and Practice of Teaching, another on Systematic Method-

ology, a third on Common School Education, and still another on School Management."

"Do you try to follow everything you find in these books? Isn't there a great deal in them that is only theoretical and has no practical application?"

"To your first question I reply that I do not, for not everything is at present applicable to my work. As to your second question, it seems to me every good theory has some practical application. Is not an excellent theory sometimes condemned because some bungler has misinterpreted it or has made a fizzle by trying to apply it under conditions to which it is not suited? When I read books on teaching, I regard the principles discussed in them as merely suggestive, and I have already had opportunity to apply several of them in ways not mentioned in the books. . . . Are there any more counts in the indictment against me?"

"There certainly are," Mr. Dow replied with mock gravity. "I am told that certain *friends* of the Blazers are trying to make Arthur's parents believe that he was unjustly treated."

"How are these *friends* succeeding?"

"Not brilliantly. Mrs. Blazer is a very religious and a very conscientious woman. She can see that Arthur put himself in the wrong, but her maternal affection naturally disposes her to take his part. Mr. Blazer thinks no teacher ever lived with half your wisdom and sense of fairness. Then, there are a few narrow-minded people who think you dress too well and that you 'put on airs!'"

Stockley was amused at this. His everyday suit was his best one, and its ten months of faithful service

had made it quite shiny and somewhat threadbare. But he was one of the men we sometimes see who give to cheap and ancient apparel an appearance of elegance, and whose every movement is suggestive of gentlemanly courtesy.

"I must try to live that notion down," said he. "Now if there is anything more, let me hear it. I want to know the worst."

"There is just one more charge against you," said Mr. Dow, with a suspicion of a smile lurking about his eye, "and I bring that charge myself."

"Haste me to know it," said Stockley, bracing himself, "'and my firm nerves shall never tremble.'"

"You stated, before beginning your spelling exercise, the other day, that you would not then consume time by giving reasons for your plan of conducting the exercise. Some of your rules seemed unfair to me, and I'd like to hear you explain them to me. Why do you refuse to pronounce a word the second time if the pupil doesn't understand it? Why should the pupil be made to suffer for your carelessness?"

"That's a good question, Mr. Dow, and I will try to give you a good answer. In the first place, I do not see that the pupil suffers. If he does not understand, I give him the next word in the book, and he has his chance just the same. Perhaps he ought to suffer, for his failure to understand may be due to inattention. I am very particular to pronounce each word with great distinctness, and if I am conscious of failure to do so, I pronounce it again without waiting to see whether the pupil understands. Under the present plan, a pupil could feign not to understand a difficult word in hope:

that the next one would be easy. In the second place, this rule places a premium on attention instead of placing it upon inattention as under the old plan."

"I see what your point is," said Mr. Dow, "but I'm not sure your plan is best. But why don't you give the next pupil a chance to spell a word that has been missed? Words that are missed are likely to be the hard ones—the very ones they need to learn—but your rule throws them out of the lesson altogether."

"I admit that my rule is defective as it was stated the other day. In practice I pronounce the misspelled words again before the end of the recitation. My reason for not passing a misspelled word to "next" is that "next" would have two trials—which would often be two guesses—on the spelling; the third one would have three, and so on. For example, suppose a pupil spells the word seize, s i e z e. The next pupil thinks that spelling right until the teacher says "wrong." He then guesses at another spelling which happens to be right, and so appears to an advantage that doesn't really belong to him. For a similar reason, only one trial is permitted on a given word. A pupil either knows how to spell it or he does not. The second trial is often a mere guess."

"I'm a little doubtful about these rules," said the director, "for they are, to say the least, revolutionary; but how can you justify leaving the question of whether a word is missed to the leader of the opposite side? In doing this you deliberately place a pupil or a side at the mercy of the enemy. Why not appoint an umpire?"

Stockley hesitated before replying, and when he finally spoke, his manner seemed to Mr. Dow somewhat

apologetic. As he continued, however, his tone had the ring of confidence.

"If the opposite side were in reality 'the enemy,' he replied, "your criticism would be just. To appoint an umpire would be to assume that both leaders are dishonest, that they consider it the chief end of the exercise to *beat* by any means which they can make *seem* right, and that they are incapable of recognizing justice in anything which clashes with their selfish interest for the time being. That is my pet rule. I would rather give up any of the other, for, altho it is based on a theory of my own, which will doubtless seem Quixotic to a 'practical' mind, I have already tested it and am disposed to believe in its soundness. My thought is this: I want to inspire every pupil with the sentiment said to have been expressed by Henry Clay in one of his speeches on the compromise measures of 1850. 'Sir,' he said, 'I would rather be right than be President.' It is, to my mind, of much more consequence to fill these girls and boys with a zeal for truth, honesty, honor, than to make them zealous partisans or good spellers. I did not introduce this part of the plan at the first or second 'spelling-down'—they were not ready for it then. But one day when Eva Black and Isaac Dexter had been appointed to choose sides, I proposed this plan, leaving it to the scholars to adopt or reject it. 'The merit of the plan,' I explained to them, 'depends on your opinion of one another. If you think, Isaac, that Eva would tell a falsehood for the sake of beating, and if you, Eva, have that opinion of Isaac, this plan will not do.' This was a view they had never before taken, and it appealed to them. There is now growing in

the school a sentiment in favor of fairness and truthfulness that extends to the playground and into the athletic exercises. I don't claim that all the scholars are angels yet, but they are progressing in the direction of manly boyhood and womanly girlhood."

"Well," said Mr. Dow, cordially, "your ideas are new ones here, but I believe that you are, in the main, on the right track and I shall be interested in knowing what your methods have accomplished by spring."

At this point, a customer of the bank appeared in the office door and the teacher withdrew.

CHAPTER VII

A CASE OF DISCIPLINE

A few strong instincts and a few plain rules.—*Wordsworth.*

On the day following Stockley's interview with Mr. Dow, in the bank parlor, he dropped into the grocery store to have a chat with Dan Loring. Dan's greeting was decidedly cool, and he did not respond as usual when the teacher, according to his custom, saluted him with a jocose remark. Stockley had been in the grocery frequently and had felt at every visit of late, as if Dan's cordiality were gradually cooling. The fact was that ever since Visitors Day Dan had had a grievance against Stockley, which, at first, appeared so small that he had been ashamed to hold it, and he had about succeeded in forgetting it when a busybody had put it into his head that the new teacher was an upstart who bowed down before the aristocracy of Green Valley and held himself aloof from common people. Another had asserted that the children of lawyers, doctors, and wealthy people were favored in school, at the expense of the children of laborers, mechanics,—“and grocery-men,” was added for Dan's benefit. Just before Stockley's call, here recorded, busybody number two had spent a gossip half-hour in the grocery and had taken, to clinch his former assertions, the fact of Stockley's incorporation into the banker's family. “Ef that ain't proof enough for ye,” he declared, with a side-nod, “then, by gol, I dunno what is.” This suggestion completed the process by which his pimple of grievance had

grown into a raging carbuncle. Stockley determined to have it out with Loring then and there.

"Are you sick, Mr. Loring?" said he. Stockley had not adopted the familiar style of addressing grown men by their given names, either whole or nicked. This fact, together with his custom of using a *Mr.* when addressing a man, strengthened the popular notion that he was "stuck up."

"No, I'm not sick," said Loring. He took a hammer and began opening a barrel of sugar.



"Why, Loring," said the teacher, "you act almost as if you had some grudge against me. What's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing very particular, I guess. You've got a lot of stylish friends now and it don't make any difference to you what I think."

"It does make a difference, I assure you. Now, look here, Mr. Loring, if you really mean what your manner and words seem to imply,—and that is that you have some secret grievance against me and that you don't propose to allow me to defend myself against it or even to know what it is—if that is your position, I tell you plainly I have no use for the friendship or companionship of such a man, be he stylish or not stylish. But I don't want the matter settled that way. You were one of my first friends here,—at least, I supposed you were, and I put it to you as a fair-minded man, whether it is just to try, judge, and condemn me without a hearing?"

Loring whirled around and faced his visitor.

"All right, *professor*," he said, his voice trembling with excitement, "if my Charlie had been a banker's son, would you have been in such an almighty hurry to mark him *tardy* as you were before all my neighbors on your 'Visitors Day'?"

"'Oh, sits the wind in that corner?'" thought Stockley. Aloud, he said, "Your question is a fair one, and I'll give it a straight answer. You seem to be under two errors, and I have enough confidence in your sense of fairness to believe that you will correct them if I show you that they *are* errors. Now, in the first place, I was not in an 'almighty hurry' to mark Charlie tardy. The roll is always called briskly, and I probably wrote his number on the board as quickly as I could. Now, honor bright, Mr. Loring, do you think that when

his number was reached in the roll call, I ought to have omitted placing his number on the board, on the ground that he was a grocer's son, or because you were a very kind and considerate friend of mine?"

"No, I don't, of course not, but—a—well, it seems like as long as he came into the room about three seconds after his number was called it ought not to be scored up against him. Charlie has laid himself out not to have a tardy or absent mark. He thinks the world and all of you, and it's mainly on that account he tries so hard to be on time. Why, since school began he has left his meals half finished and run all the way to school so as not to be tardy. I care more for the way Charlie feels about it than anything else."

"So do I," was the reply, "but for all that, it is entirely out of my power to alter the fact. Here, suppose I should hold this red-hot poker against your cheek three seconds by my watch, it would leave a scar, wouldn't it? I would not 'score it up' against you that you had been burned, but the scar would be there, and my excusing you for having been burned could not change the fact that you *were* burned. Charlie is entitled to great credit for his punctuality, but I know you are too honest a man to claim that my record should be falsified to save Charlie's pride."

"Of course not," assented Dan. The light was breaking in upon him, under Stockley's presentation of the case.

"There is another consideration," resumed the teacher. "It would have been an injustice to Charlie to call him present under the circumstances."

"I don't see it," said Dan.

"It's like this: if I make my record say that a pupil is *present* when he is *absent*, or if I make it say that he is *not* tardy when he is tardy, I tell a falsehood, and I am training the pupil to expect that whenever he gets into a tight place, his friends will falsify to help him out of it. If it is right for *them* to lie him out of a difficulty it is right for *him* to lie out of it. Honestly, Mr. Loring, wouldn't both you and Charlie prefer to have him stand on a true record—the one he actually makes, rather than on one I have falsified for him?"

"To be sure, I would. I don't want anything that isn't right, and Charlie don't either."

"There was something in your first question that I will answer if you wish me to. It has absolutely no bearing on my treatment of Charlie, and I don't like to think it necessary for me to tell you whether, if Charlie had been a banker's son—"

"Hold on! hold on!" exclaimed Dan, grinning and throwing up his hands. "Don't shoot! I surrender. I hope the Lord'll forgive me for making such a blooming idiot of myself. If you'll take me back on the old terms we'll call off the strike. By jolly, Stockley, if you teach the boys and girls half as well as you've taught me this afternoon, you're doing a mighty good job, and I'll fight for you till the sun freezes solid."

The two men clasped hands. They were both in good humor; their relations now were in *statu quo ante bellum*; and that afternoon marked the beginning of a warmer friendship based on mutual respect,—a friendship which came to Stockley's aid when, later in the year, he found himself in a "peck of troubles".

While Stockley's gallant bark sailed on, wafted by

the favoring gales of friendship, the busybodies continued their infamous work, even as the Earth-shaker, Poseidon, "gathered clouds and stirred the deep, starting tempests from every side," when Odysseus set forth in his broad-beamed raft from Calypso's isle.

It was one of the regulations in the Green Valley School that every pupil should pass out of doors at recess. If any of them wished to re-enter the room immediately after passing out, they were at liberty to do so, altho the teacher tried—and with considerable success—to encourage out-of-door exercise. Some disorder in the vestibule had occasioned the requirement that no playing or any kind of scuffling should take place there. According to his custom, Stockley had presented this matter to the school in such a light that the pupils could see the reasonableness of the requirement, and they virtually made it themselves. It was several weeks before anyone presumed to violate the self-imposed rule. One day, during the afternoon recess, Stockley heard a loud scuffling of feet in the vestibule. At first he paid no attention to it, but the noise became louder, and several bumps and thuds seemed to indicate the progress of a wrestling bout. Opening the door the teacher discovered James Wakely scuffling with Lizzie Dalny. He was trying to put Lizzie out of doors, and she was resisting. Stockley hoped his presence would end the contest, but James continued his efforts to eject the girl, who was strong and nearly as large as he.

Stepping behind James, Stockley seized him by the collar and jerked him sharply backward, in order to

separate the two. He at once released his hold on James, who stumbled backward, striking his elbows on the floor. He rose, whimpering and holding his right elbow in the opposite hand.

During the remainder of the afternoon, James was quiet, but thoughtful.

"Here's a chance," so he said to himself, "to get back on Stockley. I know my elbow's bleeding some, for it feels moist. I'll show it to mother—bloody shirt-sleeve and all—and she'll have father bring Mr. Teacher up standing." When school was dismissed, James took the nearest route for home.

Mrs. Wakely was a stout, florid woman, with force in her manner and vigor in her temper. The pink and white in her face, and the somewhat showy elegance of her attire attracted attention to her wherever she appeared. She possessed a powerful voice of soprano range and quality which of itself would have given her the entrée into society circles had it not been that her turbulent temper often betrayed her into brilliant and forcible character sketches of her neighbors. These sketches often had the merit of truth, but always the disadvantage of being distasteful to their subjects, who received them direct from the factory. It was understood by those who had caught glimpses behind the domestic curtain, that Doctor Wakeley was a henpecked husband.

Doctor Wakeley was a tall man, of large frame, weighing, perhaps, a score of pounds over two hundred. He was well educated, skillful in his profession, and was recognized as the leading physician of his section of the state. He was of

genial disposition, and this, with a fund of anecdote and a ready tongue, made him a favorite with both sexes in all classes. The general respect for him was qualified, however, by a proneness to bluster, which, like the Neapolitan volcano, had seasons of rest followed by periods of activity. The Doctor's cronies had noticed the singular fact that his most violent eruptions of boastfulness were synchronous with the visits he made to Jake Rice's saloon; and it was further noted, by his next-door neighbors, that such a visit was the invariable finale to a Wakely operatic exhibition, the predominant features of which were impassioned solos and duets rendered by a high soprano and a basso profundo.

These were the immediate ancestors of the boy whom we left hastening homeward, with the intent of rousing the maternal lioness. Dr. Wakeley had been very cordial to the new teacher, and had expressed his pleasure at the progress his son appeared to be making in his studies.

"Where's mother?" James bawled to his sister, Nellie, whom he found in the front yard.

"She's in the parlor; why?"

James made no answer, but rushed into the house. Pausing a moment in the hallway, he caught the injured elbow in his left hand, contorted his face with simulated pain, and entered the parlor, his body bent with an agony he did not feel. His mother looked up.

"Why, James," she cried, starting forward, "what's the matter?"

"O, mother! my elbow is *awfully* hurt?"

"Why, James! how did you hurt it?"

"I *didn't* hurt it; Stockley did it."

"Stockley, eh? Let me see it."

"Oh, I don't believe I can get my coat off; it is *awful*."

"Let me help you off with your coat."

"O, mother, I can't straighten my arm out; I'm afraid there's a bone broken."

"What's the matter," said a deep voice. Dr. Wakely stood in the door.

"Here's some more of Stockley's work. He drove Arthur Blazer out of school, and now he has begun on James," wrathfully exclaimed Mrs. Wakely.

The Doctor came forward. "Are you hurt?" he asked. "Your elbow, is it? Here—let me get your coat off."

"Ouch!" yelled James, as his father, straightened out the arm, "*you hurt*."

Paying little attention to the protests of his youthful heir, the Doctor rolled up the shirt sleeve and looked at the elbow. He found a slight abrasion, from which a little blood had oozed, staining the white shirt sleeve. "His arm literally bathed in blood," was Mrs. Wakely's description of the injury to a neighbor, that evening.

Dr. Wakely's surgical sense told him that the scratch was not serious enough to be spoken of as an injury, and he had seen enough of malingering to know that James's agony was wholly feigned. He was about to say something to that effect when he checked himself and called for bandages and liniment. He knew from experience that to oppose his wife's view of the serious character of the case would ring up the curtain on a domestic comic opera, in which he would be made to

appear as a tyrant husband, abusing a delicate wife who is trying to protect her innocent child from his brutality.

"Now, Doctor Wakeley," said his wife, when he had finished bandaging the arm, "I want to know what you're going to do about this. Are you going to call that ruffian to account, or have I got to go and do it?"

"I don't know yet how it happened," said the Doctor. "How was it, James?"

In a feeble voice, interrupted by catchings of the breath, and spasmodic movements of the elbow to indicate paroxysms of pain, James told his father how Lizzie Dalny had caught hold of him in the school house entry; how Stockley had rushed at him, seized him by the throat, pushed him over and then pounded him up and down on the hard floor until every joint in his body was sore and his elbow felt as if the bone was broken; how Stockley had yanked him up from the floor and made him go to his seat, when he could just drag one foot after the other; how he had suffered such awful pain that he couldn't study; and how he had just strength enough to crawl home when school was out.

The Doctor listened to the lying tale without comment, recognizing its essential falsity, and when his irate spouse demanded that he should, that very night, visit condign punishment upon the "brute" who had "almost killed" his child, he muttered that he would see the teacher and "straighten the matter out." At supper he was silent, while his wife entertained the family with tirades against "beggarly upstarts, that set themselves up as professors" and "people that call themselves men and haven't courage enough to pro-

tect their own children." As soon as the meal was finished, the Doctor put on his hat and went out.

He walked slowly down town. He found himself involved in a serious dilemma. If he were to act on his own judgment, he would seek the teacher; would tell him that he had heard of his trouble with James and assure him that if the boy had misbehaved, he would co-operate with him, the teacher, in disciplining him; and would then hear Stockley's version of the trouble. On the other hand, he realized that he would be held to a strict account of his interview with the schoolmaster and that his home would be made a place of torment to him unless he were able to report that he had "licked" or, at least, thoroughly bullied him.

In the midst of his doubts, his eye caught the red sign on the glass door of Jake Rice's saloon. There was that inside which would calm his nerves and blunt the mental pain he was enduring. He entered and ordered a glass of whisky. Taking it to a table, he sat and sipped it. In less than a minute, an agreeable sensation of warmth stole over him. By the time the glass was empty, his wife's view of the case seemed a little less unreasonable to him. He ordered his glass replenished. In two minutes it was again empty. The liquor had warmed "the cockles of his heart." To be sure, he thought, James had not been seriously crippled, but what right had a stranger to come to a peaceful town and begin abusing the young people whose parents were trying to give them an education? It wasn't at all likely that Stockley was a saint who couldn't do wrong and that James was a little fiend, who couldn't tell the truth. "What motive," he asked

himself, "what *motive*—that's where it is—what *motive* could that poor boy possibly have for lying about his teacher?" He felt that he was beginning to take a healthy, a reasonable view of the case. He struck the table with his fist and ordered a third glass.

"Fill it up full," he ordered.

His sips were now larger and more frequent. As the level of the liquor lowered, the matter that had troubled him gradually took a different form, and appeared in a clearer light. The lying spirit of Alcohol fastened its grip upon him. It whispered to him that his wife's maternal instinct was unerring; that at all events, she was *his wife*; she had always been true to him; she was the mother of *his boy* and that boy was *his child*, and "by the great horn spoon," no rascally upstart should come into his family and club his children (here a parental tear filled his eye) with impunity. He had reached the fighting stage of intoxication. He had sense enough to know that another glass would be too much and that he must act quickly before his courage should ooze away. It would have taken a close observer to note any unsteadiness in his gait as he emerged from the saloon.

He inquired of the first man he met on the street if he had seen anything of Professor Stockley, and was informed that the man he sought was then in the office of the Excelsior Hotel. Proceeding thither, he saw his victim through the glass front. He opened the door and called to him. "Professor," he said, "may I speak to you a moment outside?" Stockley had stopped in passing, to speak with Austin Green, the young landlord, for the two had become excellent friends

during the teacher's stay at the hotel. He stepped out on the piazza. He conjectured the object of the Doctor's call, and his olfactory sense informed him of his visitor's condition.

"Good evening, Doctor," said he, "what can I do for you?"

"You can't do anything for me,—you've done too much already,—you've been beating my boy, and I'm here (here he raised his voice) *to know what you mean by it.*"

"You are in error," replied Stockley, "I did not beat James."

"Yes, you did, and you needn't try to lie out of it. I know all about it. I've heard the whole story and you can't throw any dust in my eyes and I've come here to have this thing out with you right here without any palaver, and it's no use for you to say that you didn't intend to hurt the boy, for you did,—you *did*. I'm not going to do anything rash without giving you a chance t' mention any 'xtenuating circumstances if th'r are any, but you've got to speak almighty quick. Now, young man, have you got anything to say for yourself?"

Without Stockley's knowledge, Austin Black had sent his burly hostler out of a back door, with instructions to pass around to the front, post himself behind a pillar, and "sail in" if the Doctor should lift his arm against the teacher. For the same purpose, Black had placed himself at the office door, which he held a little ajar, listening to the conversation.

"You have a perfect right to inquire, in a gentlemanly way about my treatment of James," replied

Stockley, "and I will be glad to explain this matter to you" (he was about to say, "when you have sobered off," but refrained,) "at some other time."

"Some other time won't answer. I want your explanation right here, if you have any to offer, and it must be straight and satisfying to th' intellect of any man, woman 'r child and-a no p'varication n'r foolishness. Never b'fore has 't fall'n to my lot to find fault 'th a teacher's treatment 'f a child 'f mine, but I want it und'stood th't no int'loper c'n come into this peaceful c'mun'ty and abuse *my child* w'th im-p'r-tun'ty. I've a good mind to lick you right here."

The peculiarity of the Doctor's language was not due to lack of intelligence, but to that thickening of the tongue and that partial loss of control over the mental processes which characterize the stage of inebriety he had then reached. As he grew more incoherent and more belligerent, the office door opened a little wider, and a burly form edged almost into view around the pillar which concealed it. The Doctor's threat stirred Stockley's fighting blood, but keeping in mind the unfortunate condition of his antagonist, as well as the friendly spirit he had hitherto shown, he did not attempt to reason with him. His reply was brief and pointed.

"Doctor Wakely," he said, quietly and firmly, "you are a larger man than I, and can perhaps 'lick' me, but you cannot frighten me. If James continues in school, he will be under my authority. If you're going to lick me, begin now, for I have other business to attend to."

The Doctor was dazed. The affair was taking a

different turn from what he had expected. He was passing out of the fighting and into the depressed stage of intoxication. After waiting a few seconds without receiving a reply, Stockley re-entered the hotel. The Doctor went home, where he reported that he had fixed "that fellow" so that he wouldn't want to "monkey with James any more."

The effect this report had on James's subsequent conduct in school will be related in another chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

A SCHOOL ROMANCE

A mighty pain to love it is,
And 't is a pain that pain to miss;
But of all pains, the greatest pain
It is to love, but love in vain.

—Cowley.

“Will you please help me with this example in percentage?”

Stockley supposed all the pupils had passed out of the room, and was making up his daily attendance record when he heard these words in a soft voice at the side of his desk. He had become quite familiar with the tones, for he had several times, within the past two weeks, heard them preferring a similar request. Urline Simpton was a quiet and studious girl of seventeen or thereabout, with brown hair, a high forehead surmounting full cheeks tinged with red and sparingly sown with freckles which were invisible except to a close observer. The sadness in her large, light-blue eyes always impressed strangers and led them to wonder what sombre history was written in their depths. Urline was often the last pupil to leave the school at night, and altho Stockley's duties usually detained him after the pupils had gone, he had frequently overtaken her and had walked some distance with her on his homeward way. Of late, she had had many difficulties with her studies, and had asked his help in overcoming them. In his glances about the room while the school was in session he had frequently found her great eyes bent upon him, with a sorrow-

ful expression which impressed him in a peculiar manner, and which he was unable to interpret. On this evening, when he heard her request for assistance, the expression of her face, as he looked up, was a revelation to him. Her head was ever so little inclined to one side, and the ghost of a melancholy smile faded away as his eyes rested on her

"Can it be," flashed into his mind, "that the girl is in love with me?"

His manner was almost brusque as he rendered the desired help. As soon as he had given it he rose and took his hat from its peg, preparatory to passing out. Urline turned away with what Stockley fancied to be a grieved expression, and as soon as she had started for the village he walked away in the opposite direction.

When the teacher entered the schoolroom the next morning, Urline was at her desk, bending over a book, while half a dozen other pupils were sitting or walking about, in lively conversation. On the teacher's desk lay a small, square envelope, addressed in a neat, feminine hand to

Professor R. A. Stockley

"Urline Simpton!" was his first thought. He laid the envelope to one side, took his seat, and commenced writing. After a minute or more had passed, he looked up and glanced slowly about the room. When his eye at last rested on Urline, he was at once struck with the intensity of her study, and this, with the scarlet in her usually pale forehead confirmed his sus-

picion that she was the correspondent. It was not until the last student had departed that evening, and he had carefully locked the door on the inside, that he broke the seal of the little missive. The contents were slightly amusing and decidedly embarrassing to him. This is what he read:

TO MY GUIDE AND FRIEND

At morning-tide I sit me down
By the bright brooklet's gurgling stream,
And muse, far from the noisy town,
On mem'ries sweet, which ever seem
To be of thee,
Only of thee.

At eve's still hour I walk beside
The darksome river's treach'rous flow,
And think how like its turbid tide
Would be the blackness of my woe
Bereft of thee,
Ah me, of thee!

O, when I stem, from shore to shore,
The torrent deep which lies between
The now and the forevermore,
Still, still my heart will swell, I ween,
With thoughts of thee,
Sweet thoughts of thee.

Fortunately or unfortunately, Rutledge Stockley was so constituted that the funny side of an experience like this was the first to present itself. He laughed audibly at the picture of Urline Simpton dragging her skirts thru the wet grass on the banks of streams of assorted sizes, depths, and turbidness, and mooning on his account. But his mood quickly changed. Urline was a faithful student and a good girl. Moreover, although her lines indicated a morbid mental condition they were not entirely destitute of merit. A half-

hour's rumination matured a plan, which he successfully carried out, to renovate the poor girl's diseased mentality with healthful thoughts from his own superabundant vigor.

The next morning, Stockley was at the school-house half an hour before the time for opening. He was not mistaken in his expectation that Urline would be one of the early comers. An opportunity soon presented itself for speaking to her in the presence of other girls. Seeing Eva Black and Allie Harley near her desk, he walked briskly thither, with an open smile on his face and her poem in hand.

"Urline," he said, taking no pains to conceal his words from the other girls, who at once discontinued their conversation and listened, "Urline, your poem is really very good. I suppose you wanted me to know about your poetic talent. I had not suspected it. It came to me as a very agreeable surprise. The imaginary guide and friend (or is he a real one?) to whom you address it may well feel complimented. You ought to cultivate your talent for rhyme and measure, Urline."

"What! Urline writing poetry?" exclaimed Eva; "can't we read it?" She made a movement as if to take it from Stockley's hand.

"O, Mr. Stockley!" cried Urline, springing forward with a crimson face.

The teacher put the paper behind him. "You need not fear, Urline," said he, "no one shall see it without your permission; but you must not be so modest. I think we must look to you for an original poem to be read by you at our next Friday afternoon rhetoricals.



Now, girls," he laughed, addressing Eva and Allie, "with your permission, I'm going to ask our poetess to grant me the favor of a private audience." The girls good-naturedly retired and the teacher, after making

some suggestions to Urline on minor points relating to language and construction, returned to his desk.

Urline's sensitive soul was wounded. She had conceived for Stockley a vague and dreamy but none the less intense passion such as girls of her temperament sometimes form for their favorite teachers. She had not attempted to analyze her feeling; she was simply conscious of a sadly sweet sentiment, too sacred to be revealed to anyone but its object, which filled her soul, and was to be—she firmly believed—the dominant influence in her life. Stockley's light treatment of the matter was a shock to her. It showed the futility of hoping for any response to her sentiment. But while it grieved and humiliated her, it began a work of disillusion and planted seeds which, under the watchful care of the teacher, developed, in time, into a healthful growth. By the end of the year, she had outgrown her sentimental weakness and had passed into a stage of normal activity. When the pain induced by the teacher's kindly rebuff had sufficiently subsided, she composed, at his suggestion, a little poem which was read in public on a Visitors Day, in the early spring. It spoke of river and brook, as her former poem had done, and perhaps she designed it to inform her teacher of the new viewpoint from which she looked upon life. While the latter poem was, possibly, no better than the other from a literary point of view, its tone indicated a more normal habit of thought.

THE SINGING STREAMS

The bounding, dancing, purling streams
Sing blithesomely all day;
And filled with joy, with rapture, seems
Their merry roundelay.

The river adds its deep, full bass;
A glad duet they make;
'And laughter brightens Nature's face
In meadow, hill, and lake.

But when I list the choral song
Of river, brook, and mead,
My soul responds with courage strong
For noble thought and deed.

Thus pleasantly, tho strenuously, did the young
teacher pursue his—

“Delightful task, to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot.”

If his guardian angel brought him any warning of
threatened disaster, the premonition was unheeded and
even unheard.

CHAPTER IX

EDMUND BURKE

Humor is the only test of gravity, and gravity of humor.
A subject which will not bear raillery is suspicious.

Gorgias Leontinus.

The next morning after Dr. Wakely's futile attempt to bully the schoolmaster, the latter was smilingly accosted by two or three friends on his way to the school. John McMillan stood in the door of his hardware store when the teacher came along.

"Good morning, Stockley," said John, laughing, "Doc. called on you last night, didn't he?"

"Yes—he did," Stockley replied, his manner indicating some reluctance to discuss the subject.

"Oh, you needn't hesitate to speak of it," said John, "everybody in town knows about it by this time and, what's more, everybody's glad you called his bluff and sent him off with his flag hauled down."

"Why, Mr. McMillan, there was no fighting, and I have no wish to be regarded as an upper dog. Besides, I have, perhaps, not heard the last of it from the Doctor. He believed I had abused his son, and I don't blame him for wishing to protect the boy."

"Bosh! He knew very well you hadn't hurt Jim, and he knew, too, that if Jim had his desert, you'd have given him a good whaling."

"How did you know anything about it?" inquired the teacher.

"Why, Austin Black was in the store last night after

you sent Doc. packing, and you never saw a crowd more tickled than the fellows were when he told how you wound him up. Ha, ha, ha!"

"But how do you know whether James deserved punishment or anything about what I really did to him?"

"O, Charlie Loring told all about it, last night, in Dan's grocery. Jim has always had trouble with his teachers and he needs a good lathering about once in so often to make him know what's what."

"Still, the Doctor appeared to really believe that James had been unjustly treated."

"Don't you believe it. His wife just put him up to it, and he wouldn't have dared to peep to you about it if he hadn't filled up on Dutch courage first. Some of us fellows saw him going into Jake Rice's saloon just after we heard Charlie Loring's story, and we all knew what *that* meant. Doc's a great blusterer, but he'd run away from a ten year old boy if the kid shook his fist at him. Doc's naturally a good-natured man and means to do the right thing, but I'll bet a dollar his wife bullied him into looking you up to lick you and he didn't dare to go home without trying to do it."

"Well," said Stockley, "I only want James to be a good boy and attend to his work."

He started along the street and met Dan Loring.

"Hello," cried Loring, "I'm mighty glad you're able to be out!" He walked around the schoolmaster and gingerly felt of his arms and legs, his skull and collar bones. "I expected Doc'd have to turn to and set all your bones after he got thru with you last night. He, he, he!"

"No," said Stockley, "it wasn't quite as bad as that."

"Look here," said Dan, with assumed seriousness, "half a dozen of us fellows will go with you for a body guard till you get past Doc's house, if you just say the word."

"No, never mind. I'm much obliged, but I think there's no serious danger. I must hurry along or I'll be late at school."

The secretary of the Minnesota State Board of Health, in one of his addresses delivered before the State Educational Association, spoke of the importance of cultivating hygienic habits in the young. "Young people," said he, "need to be constantly reminded of those practices which are beneficial to health and prejudicial to it. If parents and teachers are persistent, there comes a time, at the age of from 17 to 21, when the boy begins to hang up his hat, to shut the door, to eat, drink, and sleep hygienically." Some of the pupils in the Green Valley school had reached the stage of development referred to, but there was a considerable number who had not yet acquired the habit of closing the schoolroom door after them, and one of the most inveterate offenders was Mary Milligan.

When Stockley reached the schoolhouse after his conversation with McMillan and Dan Loring, the hands of the clock indicated four minutes of nine. When he rang the bell, the pupils who were still outside started promptly for the building. That lesson they had pretty thoroly learned. Mary Milligan was the last to enter the room

and, according to her invariable custom, she left the door wide open. Stockley had sent her back to close the door on no fewer than twenty occasions before this, and he was in some danger of losing his patience. He was sorely tempted to administer a cutting and sarcastic admonition, and a few keen phrases came to his mind that would have made Mary wish she had never seen a door. But he caught himself and held back. It would have afforded him a temporary gratification to give Mary a cutting up, but would it do her any good? Would it help her to form the right habit? Would it not so arouse her hostility to him as to practically deprive him of the power to influence her for good? She liked him now and he had her confidence. Again, his reserve of good sense came to his aid, and in much less time than it has taken to describe the working of his mind he had decided upon a remedy which happily proved to be efficacious, for it cured the leaving-the-door-open habit, not only for Mary but for the entire school. As his proceeding illustrates a principle which was fundamental in his method of discipline, it will be described in detail.

There was in the teacher's face and action, no token of annoyance. The morning was cold, and pupils who sat near the door shivered a little as the chilly air swept in. They looked appealingly to the teacher, but he proceeded with the roll-call as if everything were snug and ship shape. It was customary for the school to sing immediately after the calling of the roll, but this morning the teacher said to them: "I read an excellent story not long ago in which I think you would be interested, and I know of no better time to tell it to

you than now if you would like to have me do so. But if you have the story, we can't have the usual morning song. What do you say?"

He saw by the animated and smiling faces before him that he had struck a popular chord. No one looked more pleased than Mary Milligan. "Shall we have the story instead of the song, Mary?" asked the teacher. "Yes, sir!" she replied, with an energetic nod. "Very well," he assented, "the story it shall be; and as Mary is the one who has expressed what seems to be the general preference, this story shall be called Mary's Story. I'll dedicate it to her." At this point, all eyes were focused on Mary. Many were compelled to turn half round and even to crane their necks in order to catch sight of her face which, by this time was suffused with red. Stockley had planned to make Mary the central figure in his dramatic monologue, without seeming to hold her up as such, hoping thus to brand upon her memory the moral of the story while retaining her good will and preserving her good nature. As for her, the concentration of attention upon her gave her a distinct sensation of discomfort without disturbing seriously her good humor. Altho no person in the room could have detected a glance of the teacher toward Mary, he watched the effect upon her of every part of his story with a solicitude analagous to that with which a careful physician watches the effect of a dose administered to a patient.

"My story," he began, "is about Sir Joshua Reynolds, a celebrated English painter, whose career extended over the greater part of the eighteenth century. I hope that some day you will know something about the

life and works of this great artist, but it is just one incident I want to tell you about this morning. One of Sir Joshua's intimate friends was Edmund Burke, a member of the British Parliament to whom we Americans owe a debt of gratitude. Well, one day at the conclusion of a visit to the artist in his studio, he (that is Burke) opened the door to pass out, and instead of closing it, as a thoughtful person would have done, he left it wide open. It was not at all strange that when the footman opened the front door for Burke to emerge upon the street, a gust of air should sweep into the house, rush thru the open door of the studio, and scatter a pile of papers that had been arranged with great precision and in a certain order. The artist, very naturally, was annoyed. Burke had carelessly (not purposely, of course) done the same thing before. After waiting about ten minutes to be sure that his visitor was well on his way, Sir Joshua rang for a servant, and dispatched him with a note to Burke who was to be found at the House of Commons. The note ran like this:

"My dear Burke:—

'An event of considerable moment to me has occurred since you left the studio a short time ago,—an event which affects me deeply.

'If you can come to me for five minutes without prejudice to the important interests you represent in the House, you have it in your power to confer a very great favor upon

'Your obedient servant,

'JOSHUA REYNOLDS.'

"Burke of course hastened to the assistance of Sir Joshua as fast as a cab could carry him. His generous Irish nature would have prompted great sacrifices, if necessary, in the service of his friend. In great excitement, he rushed into the studio, where, to his surprise, he found the artist working quite calmly at his easel. 'What is the trouble, my dear friend?' he exclaimed, 'how can I aid you?'

'Oh, it's you is it, Burke,' said Sir Joshua, calmly turning to his excited friend. 'Let me see; what was it? Oh, yes, you can "aid" me to collect and rearrange these scattered papers. They were disarranged by the wind that came in when you left the door open a little while ago.'

'Burke's hot Irish temper threatened, for a moment to master him, but it was quickly suppressed by that happy sense of humor for which the natives of the Emerald Isle are proverbial. He entered into the spirit of the serious joke and scurried about the room to help pick up the stray papers. *He never again left Sir Joshua Reynolds's door open* if he found it closed.'

The story was successful in arousing the interest of the pupils. Even James Wakely's flaccid face showed signs of animation. Mary Milligan's eyes had a thoughtful look. She somehow vaguely associated the story with something she had done or had failed to do—something upon which she had been admonished by the teacher. Her eyes which had fallen upon her desk at the conclusion of the story were again directed to him when he again began to speak.

"No papers have been scattered here," he said, "but these little girls on the front seats look rather

blue from the cold." Mary Milligan's head came up with a jerk; her face lighted up with a broad smile; she *saw the point*. "If we have a Burke here who left the door open, and if Burke can, 'without prejudice to important interests,' take time to close" (Mary was in the aisle, making for the door.) "it, she has it in her power to confer a very great favor on every schol—." He was unable to proceed, for the school was in a roar of laughter in which Mary joined. She did wish, however, she had not left the door open and before reaching her seat she had firmly resolved never, *never* to do it again.

But, while she had a "heart to resolve," her head was "to dumb forgetfulness a prey". That very forenoon, when she came in from recess, she was the last one to enter the room, and she left the door open. As soon as all were seated, Stockley began: "One day, Edmund Burke paid a visit to Sir Joshua Reynolds in the stu—" By the time the seventh word was uttered, Mary was on her way to the door, and it was impossible to finish the sentence, for the words were drowned in the laughter of the school.

It was three days before the door was again left open. Again Stockley began the story in exactly the same words he had used before: "One day, Edm—" Again the laughter and again a scholar on his way to the door. This time it was one of the boys.

These three doses completed the cure. It was, thereafter, very rare for the door to be left open when it should have been closed. If a luckless pupil chanced to commit the offense, the others took the matter in

hand, calling him Edmund Burke, until some other poor fellow had earned the name.

CHAPTER X

JAMES LEARNS A VALUABLE LESSON

Si finis bonus est, totum bonum erit.

—*Latin Proverb.*

James Wakely's step had an unaccustomed springiness when he appeared on the school grounds the morning following his father's interview with Stockley. The Doctor's report to his wife of how "the poor fellow" had cringed before him would have been entitled to be classed as *yellow* if the reporter had been a journalist. In the process of transmission through Mrs. Wakely's intellectual dye vat into that of her son, it lost none of its saffron-like brilliancy, and when the latter presented the finished product to a few select schoolmates, it had the variety as well as the brilliancy of a first-class rainbow. The boy felt an unwonted sense of freedom. He was confident that he could now defy the teacher's authority and that the latter would not dare resent his defiance. He determined that, before the day was over, he would put his new freedom to the test. He had been drawn—against his will—into the current of interest in the story about Edmund Burke, but he had speedily got himself out of it. The teacher was not unobservant of James's attitude. He read the boy's purpose in every action and he determined to precipitate matters by presenting him a ready-made opportunity.

Between two of the afternoon recitations, he tapped his desk bell. This was a signal for the scholars to

stop whatever work they were doing and fold their arms to hear anything the teacher might wish to say to them. Every pupil except James promptly folded his arms.

"James," said Stockley, "did you hear the bell?"

"Yes," was the sullen reply.

"Fold your arms." The direction was given in the teacher's ordinary tone.

"I can't; my elbow's sore." As the misguided boy flung the words spitefully out he cast at his next neighbors a leering smile which told them to watch and see how the master would fear to insist.

In fact, the master did not then insist. What he expected had happened. He had been a little anxious about James's condition, in view of what his father had said, and had been relieved to see that the injury to his elbow was not serious enough to prevent the free play of the joint in the sports of the playground. It was no part of his design to encourage James in a rebellious action in order to enjoy the pleasure of "taking it out of him." His aim was rather to draw to a head the morbid matter which he knew was festering in his heart and then to heal the sore by lancing it. It was solely to this end that he rang the bell. As the students, however, expected him to say something, he spoke as follows, slowly walking down the aisle toward James's seat:

"Referring to the story I told you this morning, the failure to close the door made us all a little uncomfortable for a few minutes, but that was a matter of relatively small importance." By this time he had covered half the distance to James's seat, without cast-

ing a single glance in the boy's direction. He resumed: "What I would like to have you see is that to form the habit of closing the door will help you to be exact about everything you do and the habit of exactness is more valuable than a money capital of many thousands of dollars." The moment after he said "dollars," James Wakely felt himself moving into the aisle and toward the teacher's desk, driven by some extraneous force. His surprise was comparable to that of Simon Legree when he was knocked down by George Sheldon. When James, impelled by the locomotive behind him, had reached the open space in front of the master's desk, he became conscious of a voice saying, *sotto voce*:

"You have heard about your father's visit to me last night, haven't you?"

"Yes sir," said the trembling boy.

"Well, James, that visit does not affect your relations to me in anyway. Now, my boy, walk straight to your seat and fold your arms the moment you sit down. If you fail to do exactly as I tell you, I shall throw you out of the window."

It was, perhaps, unwise for Stockley to make this threat; he so thought subsequently when he reflected on the incident. But he meant what he said and was determined to fulfil his promise in the event of the boy's disobedience. Happily, the occasion did not arise. James's arms were in the required position a little before he was fairly seated.

At the close of school, James again took the nearest route for home. Again he rushed into the house and called to his mother

"Mother," he cried, "Mr. Stockley has been shaking me again!"

"Go up town and find your father," was the reply, "and tell him about it. The fellow must have another lesson."

Away went James. His father was, at this time, in the bank, and while James is looking for him, we will relate the Doctor's experience in his interviews with the school board.

Dr. Wakely's first visit, after making his morning professional calls, was to the office of Squire Green, justice of the peace and clerk of the board. The Squire was at liberty and his caller at once proceeded to business.

"I dropped in, Squire," he began, "to talk a little with you about this new teacher."

"Yes, yes," replied Squire Green, "they tell me he's keeping a pretty good school."

"I don't know about that; it strikes me, Squire, that a man that will knock the children around as this fellow does, and drag them all over the floor has a good deal to learn about keeping school, to say the least."

"Oh, you mean the fracas he had with the Blazer boy, he, he, he, he, he! Strikes me that bully didn't get half what he deserved, if I've heard the right of it." Again the jolly Squire chuckled at the remembrance of the scene as described by his son Calvin. He had heard all about James Wakely's trouble and the Doctor's failure at bullying, but he chose to let the latter tell the story in his own way. As for the Doctor, he did not relish the job he was engaged upon and

it was solely in order to purchase peace in his household that he had undertaken it.

"No, I don't refer to Arthur Blazer at all," said he; "I'm speaking of my own boy. This blustering fellow has succeeded so well in driving Mr. Blazer's son out of school that he evidently thinks he can defy the whole community. He has begun now on my boy James and has terrorized him so that he is afraid to go to school."

"That is pretty bad, Doctor," replied the clerk; "It won't do to have peaceable and well-behaved children driven out of school. What appears to be the trouble?"

The Doctor then gave the school officer James's version of the encounter in the vestibule and expressed a hope that the board would give Stockley to understand that a teacher who pursued such arbitrary and oppressive methods could not continue to hold a position as principal of the Green Valley school.

Squire Green listened courteously and assured Dr. Wakely that he would personally inquire into the matter. He said, further, that the school board would try to do its duty, and that he might rest assured no arbitrary and tyrannical regime would be allowed to prevail in the school. "I ought to add, however, he continued, "that other accounts of this affair have come to me. James, perhaps, gave you what seemed to him a correct account of it, but other scholars saw it differently. Now, giving everyone credit for the intention to state it just right, it's easy to see that it would not look quite the same to one engaged in the scuffle as it would to an outsider. There's another thing to be said. You are probably aware that every one of

James's teachers has had trouble with him. This may be because no teacher has been able to understand him and it might be well for you to consider whether the boy is not—partly, at least—in the wrong. Neither James nor the teacher should be condemned without a hearing of both sides.”

The Doctor saw the reasonableness of what Squire Green said and he felt in his heart that James was wholly wrong. Thanking the Squire for his assurances, he withdrew. His interview with Mr. Donaldson, the district treasurer, did not improve James's case, but he was determined to make a thorough job of it by presenting his complaint to the remaining member, Mr. Dow. That gentleman probed the father's wound with a delicate hand, but the operation was a painful one. The Doctor was thoroughly disgusted. He determined to assert himself in his home, and to co-operate with Mr. Stockley, for whom he had a genuine esteem, by taking James in hand, himself. His short interview with Mr. Dow had augmented his loathing for the part he was playing and when James burst into the door of the bank, the condition of his temper might be appropriately described as *ugly*. James, however, knew nothing of his father's late experiences and felt certain of parental backing.

“Father,” he shouted, “Mr. Stockley has been shaking me again!”

“— you,” burst out the now thoroughly irate father, “you go to school tomorrow morning and behave yourself and you'll have no trouble with Mr. Stockley. And don't bring home any more whining stories about

being abused in school. If you do, you and I will have a little circus all to ourselves!"

James was as much surprised as he was when the teacher gave him his second shaking. He walked out of the bank a sadder boy because his dream of wearing Arthur's mantle had been shattered; he was wiser, because he realized that home and school authority were in co-operation and that he must now walk in a straiter path. When he appeared in school the next morning his feathers were drooping and if there was still a root of bitterness in his heart, its growth was not manifest in the schoolroom. Stockley did not remind him of the episode by deed, word, or look and the troubled waters of school life subsided into their wonted calm. So far as James was concerned, the calm was on the surface. Deep in the unhappy boy's heart, the root of bitterness absorbed nourishing elements and transmuted them into poison. How from the poisonous root there grew a deadly plant which bore baleful fruit—this will be related in another part of our tale.

CHAPTER XI

HEAVITREE

A handsome house to lodge a friend;
A river at my garden's end;
A terrace walk, and half a rood
Of land set out to plant a wood.

—*Jonathan Swift.*

One glorious evening at that season which in Minnesota is the most delightful of the year,—the season

“When chill November’s surly blast
Made fields and forests bare.”

in the land of which the Ayrshire Plowman wrote,—on such an evening, Rutledge Stockley found himself spinning southward along the Summer Lake road, behind a pair of spirited bay colts, and in company with his friend Harkins, the county superintendent of schools. It was Saturday, and the teacher was to stay over Sunday at Mr. Harkins’s home, agreeably to an invitation of several weeks’ standing. He had announced to the school, just before closing on Friday, that he expected to go out of town and that there was a possibility of his being detained beyond the time of opening on Monday morning. “In case I am absent at nine o’clock, Monday morning,” he had said, “I will ask Isaac Dexter to ring the bell and attend to the roll call. You may then go on with your studies until my arrival.”

For a few minutes after starting, Mr. Harkins’s attention was carefully occupied with getting his team in hand, for altho the colts were well broken, they

were ambitious and full of life. About half a mile from the outskirts of the village, the road ran, for four or five rods thru a patch of timber,—the trees on either side coming close to the track. The horses had, by this time, struck a steady gait, which promised to land them at their destination in time for a seven o'clock supper. They were half way thru the patch of timber, and Stockley had just begun to address a remark to his companion on the beauty of the evening (it was more than an hour after sunset), when he suddenly felt himself flying thru the air toward the team. Fortunately, he alighted on the soft body of the near colt, and as he was not hurt, he hastened to the heads of the struggling animals (both of whom had been thrown) in order to either hold them down or clear them from the harness in which they seemed to be entangled. Again he fell, tripped by a rope that had been stretched across the track some twenty inches from the ground. It was the work of but a few seconds to produce his pocket knife and cut the rope. That obstacle cleared away, the colts quickly regained their feet and the younger man shouted to ask if his elder companion was hurt. He was much relieved to find that he was sitting securely on the seat of the buggy and had a firm hold on the lines. He had been thrown against the dashboard, but had promptly recovered his position without serious injury.

Assured of the safety of man and team, Stockley, without stopping "to reason why," darted into the densest part of the thicket. He had condensed into the ten seconds consumed in finding his knife and cutting the rope, a fairly complete course of syllogistic

reasoning, with major premise, minor premise, and conclusion, and it was consequent upon his conclusion that he shot into the clump of trees. His ear caught the sound of breaking twigs and rapidly retreating footsteps. He redoubled his speed, and when he emerged from the thicket, he plainly saw, not more than twenty paces ahead of him, the figures of two men or boys scurrying away. Again he increased his speed and found that he was gaining on the fugitives. There was no need to exhaust his strength by more rapid running. The intervening space shrank to fifteen paces,—to ten,—to five,—to two: he launched himself upon the nearest one, whom he had recognized. "Who is that with——". Before the completion of the question, the answer was given in a blow between the eyes, which threw him to the ground. When he recovered from his daze, which lasted but a few seconds, his assailant was so far away that he recognized the uselessness of further pursuit and returned to the buggy. "Excuse me for running away so unceremoniously," he said, as he climbed in; "I was in hopes to secure the party that stretched the rope across the road, but I was disappointed." Mr. Harkins was of the opinion that the trap had been prepared for someone else and the subject was soon dismissed from their conversation.

The silence that ensued was broken by Mr. Harkins.

"I have heard something," he said, "about your 'passage at arms,' if it may be so called, with young Wakely, and 'if my gossip Report be an honest woman

of her word,' yours was 'The victory of endurance born.' "

"I hardly look upon the incident," replied Stockley, "as a victory over the boy. If this experience shall aid James in gaining a victory over himself, I shall be well satisfied."

"Your sentiment, sir, is as rare as it is creditable to the one who entertains it. There are few, sir, who, having indicated the wisdom of their contention as you have done, would have failed to plume themselves upon having won a victory. But you, sir, have, very much to your credit, exhibited the spirit expressed in Wordsworth's Ode to Duty:

'Give unto me, made lowly wise,

The spirit of self-sacrifice.'

and permit me to assure you, sir, that Dryden's aphorism, 'Virtue is her own reward', is every whit as true as it is poetical."

"I lay no claim, Mr. Harkins," said Stockley, "to superior virtue. My aim is 'to pursue the noiseless tenor' of my way, do my duty as I understand it, and let the consequences take care of themselves."

"If you will permit me, Mr. Stockley, I will venture to suggest what seems to me a safer guide than your doctrine of *laissez faire*. It is embodied in a maxim found in the *Gesta Romanorum*: 'Whatever you do, do wisely and *think of the consequences*.' The zoilean tendency prevalent in Green Valley is by no means peculiar to that community; it is *azonic*, and it cannot with impunity be ignored. I trust, sir, that I am not understood as counseling that you

—‘crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning,’

but a degree of deference to public opinion is wise, not only by way of precaution, but also by way of that courtesy which concedes to others the same possibility of being in the right which we claim for ourselves.”

“I quite agree with you,” replied Stockley; “I think that a disposition to defer to the opinions of other people who possess my confidence is characteristic of me. What I intended to say is that having once determined on a right course, in the light of my own judgment and that of others whom it seems safe to consult, I ought to move forward in that course, animated by the spirit which Abraham Lincoln expressed in his New York speech: ‘Let us have faith that right makes might; and in that faith let us dare to do our duty as we understand it.’”

“Well said! spoken like a man! It is worth while to remember, however, that a wise general, while pursuing relentlessly an aggressive movement, keeps himself constantly on the alert. He guards against not only probable, but all possible surprise. His genius manifests itself as much in shrewd conjectures of the enemy’s plans as in the formation of his own.”

“I appreciate the point you make,” replied Stockley, “and I shall act upon the suggestion whenever I find myself in the presence of ‘the enemy’. Green Valley, however, hardly seems to me the enemy’s country. The people are apparently very friendly to me.”

“They are certainly what they appear, Mr. Stockley, but you will, I trust, permit a word of caution.

You have, in the exercise of your duty, placed Dr. Wakely's son on the defensive, and, in view of the young man's peculiar disposition, I may be excused for saying, *absente reo*,¹ that an act of treachery may be expected from him whenever he thinks he can embarrass you by such an act with safety to himself."

"Very true, very true," said Stockley, half to himself.

"That boy has been reared," resumed the Superintendent, "*ab incunabilis*² in an environment of deceit and mendacity. This is no reflection upon the father, whose unfortunate uxoriousness may be regarded as an amiable weakness in one who, in other respects, is held in high regard. If I am correctly informed, the boy now appears docile and submissive. To all appearances you have succeeded in your effort to exsect his spirit of insubordination, but you must remember, sir,"—at this point the tilt of the Superintendent's head heralded a quotation,—"*that Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret*.³ On the other hand there is truth in the saying of Marcus Aurelius: 'There is nothing Nature loves so well as to change existing forms', and I do not doubt that you can render efficient aid to Nature in the evolution of the boy's character. But your unpleasant experiences have been only casual. I trust that your brief sojourn in Green Valley has not been characterized exclusively by

. . . 'harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.'"

¹In the absence of the defendant.

²From infancy.

³You may expel Nature with a pitchfork, but she will always return.

"By no means," was the reply; "to say nothing of the pleasure my school work has given me, my social life has been made very pleasant through the courtesy of the people I have had the good fortune to meet."

"You are, I suspect, indebted quite as much to your own talents as to the good will of others for the very flattering social position accorded you. Your musical talent has been an important factor in securing for you an *entree* into the most desirable circles of Green Valley society. Your love for music, sir, and mine for poetry ought to form the basis for a warm and firm friendship between you and myself. You may be familiar with the sonnet written by Richard Barnfield two and a half centuries ago, and which is applicable, I hope, to you and me. The opening verses run like this"—here, the quotation tilt—:

"'If Music and sweet Poetry agree,
As they must needs, the sister and the brother,
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lov'st the one, and I the other.'"

The fourth verse is not quite appropriate to our case, for I am an ardent lover of music, and I am anticipating a great deal of pleasure in listening to your singing at my home. 'Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie,' that I would gladly forgo the most enticing prandia! pleasures for the sake of a few—

'Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away.'"

"It will be a pleasure to me," said Stockley, "to exercise such gift of song as I possess, if it will gratify you to have me do so."

For half a mile or more, they rode in silence, quietly enjoying the crisp air, the soft light of the moon and stars, and the pleasing sensation of movement behind a rapid team, among woodland shadows, along the borders of placid lakes, and past the twinkling lights of roadside homesteads.

Stockley broke the silence. "I have never been satisfied," he said, "with the manner in which I obtained my first-grade certificate. My possession of it is due more to your good nature than to my merit. However, I am pursuing a course of study, by which I hope to fortify myself for examination before a more exacting superintendent, should fate deprive Anita County of your services before the expiration of the certificate I now hold."

"With whom are you studying?" asked Mr. Harkins.

"Oh," laughed Stockley, "I can't brag of my preceptor,—his name is Rutledge Stockley."

"What are you trying to do in the line of self-instruction?"

"Well, I am ciphering through an arithmetic and an algebra, and I have completed two books in plane geometry, which is a new study for me."

"Do you not often need the aid of a teacher?"

"I would, perhaps, often ask the aid of one if I had one, but I am convinced that I have a better hold upon what I learn, for digging it out unaided. If I fail at the first attempt, I make a second, a third, and so on up to the fiftieth. I walk out on country roads in the evening, going over my geometrical demonstrations. The stone quarry road is a favorite path.

I sometimes walk nearly to the quarry and back before my auto-recitation is finished. I can now demonstrate every proposition in the first two books of plane geometry, without the aid of a visible figure."

"Your course is admirable," said the superintendent, "but it is not a common one. I have heard many teachers excuse their ignorance of certain branches on the ground that they had no opportunity to study them in school. I shall hereafter cite your case if you do not object, as proof of my contention that one may attain to high excellence in business, politics, the teaching profession, in short, in any activity of life with very limited school advantages. Your name, of course would not appear."

"I think I must withhold my consent," said Stockley; I have not yet attained to 'high excellence' in anything I have undertaken, and you would therefore be unable to justify your claim for me. Moreover, I am keenly conscious of my lack of that *rounding out* which is an important part of college culture, and for that reason I would not willingly be the indirect means of keeping any earnest student from availing himself of college or university privileges."

"You are, perhaps, over modest," commented Mr. Harkins, "but there is an element of truth in what you say. To revert to the cases of James Wakely, suffer an additional word of counsel before the termination of our journey shall bring our delightful and confidential conversation to a conclusion. I have already cautioned you to beware of a possible act of treachery on this boy's part. It has come to me in very indefinite form,—in fact, through 'the babbling gossip of the air,'

that he is maturing some plan for *doing you up* to adopt an expression he was overheard to employ. It is reasonably certain that he will be exceedingly cautious with regard to overt acts of insubordination in school, and also that you may hereafter be sure of his father's support in any measure your judgment may suggest. In view of these facts my counsel is that at the next appearance of a mutinous spirit, however slight, it be expelled by the infliction of 'corporal sufferance.' I am cognizant of your aversion to the employment of the rod, and I concede that its use often degenerates into abuse, but '*abusus non tollit usum*,'¹ and if it be applied until he surrender *absque ulla conditione*², the tendency will be to discourage his plotting against your safety with any person outside the school. Among the sagacious utterances of Edmund Burke, there is none more worthy of heed than this: that 'Early and provident fear is the mother of safety.'"

Stockley promised that he would give due consideration to the superintendent's friendly counsel and thanked him for his kindly interest.

They were soon passing over the Harkins farm, the land in which, as its owner explained, was "an arenulous loam with an argillaceous subsoil." He had named his homestead *Heavitree*, after the birthplace of Richard Hooker,—the name having been suggested in part by the growth of massive oaks and cottonwoods on his wood lot. One of his sons took charge of the colts as the two men alighted and entered the hall.

1. The abuse of a thing is no argument against its use.

2. Unconditionally.

Mr. Harkins laid his hand on Stockley's shoulder as the latter stepped into the door, and giving his head the quotation tilt said: "My friend, this is no spacious mansion. Heavitree is very well described in Robert Herrick's 'Thanksgiving for a House':

'A little house, whose humble roof
Is weather-proof.

.

Low is my porch, as is my fate,
Both void of state.

.

Like as my parlor, so my hall
And kitchen's small

.

Some little sticks of thorn or briar
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
And glow like it'."

The good cheer enjoyed by the guest at Heavitree need not be described in detail. After a bounteous farm-supper, the evening was passed in conversation and music, in which Stockley joined, with Mrs. Harkins, her daughter and two sons, the host smoking and talking between whiffs. "*Sua cuique voluptas*,"¹ he explained as he lighted his pipe, "and as you do not indulge in the fragrant weed, I must e'en take my tobacco as the Ancient Mariner finished his voyage—

'Alone, alone,—all, all alone'."

Had Stockley possessed an ear sensitive to tele-

¹. Everyone has his own pleasures.

audition, his enjoyment of the visit to Heavitree would have been disturbed. While he was enjoying the pleasures of social intercourse with congenial friends, two conspirators twelve miles away were engaged in the inception of a plot which boded a violent close to his career.

CHAPTER XII

THE RIVER BELLE

"The sky is changed,—and such a change! O night
And storm and darkness! Ye are wondrous strong."
—*Byron.*

The new dry-goods store of Cole and Burns, on the corner of Wilder Avenue and a mid-block alley, was nearing completion. Harry Dole had been painting the woodwork in the basement of the new store. Doors in the front of the basement opened into an area under the sidewalk and the area was partially covered with an iron grating which formed the part of the sidewalk lying next to the building. The area and the grating above it extended around the corner for some distance on the alley. On the evening of Stockley's visit at Heavitree, Harry started home from Loring's grocery a little before ten o'clock. His thoughts naturally turned to the scene of his daily work and it occurred to him that he had left a front basement door open. As it would not be out of his road to pass the new store, he turned his steps that way.

Unlocking the door and closing it behind him, he felt his way to the basement stairway. It was very dark, and he searched his vest pocket in vain for a match. Crossing the basement floor, he found that, as he had conjectured, the door had been left open. He had reached his hand out to close it, when he thought he heard a voice coming from the area under the sidewalk. The tones were subdued and he did not at first distinguish any words. He leaned forward so as to

bring his head into the opening and turned his ear in the direction of the sound. He then perceived that it came from the direction of the sidewalk above. He tiptoed into the area and, guided by the voice, made his way to the corner of the stone basement. Looking upward he saw, dimly outlined against the starry sky, the forms of two men or boys sitting on the grating with their backs against the side of the store. They had selected the side that was in shadow and which bordered the dark alley. The darkness and their distance from the street protected them from the observation of passers. Harry could now hear every word of the conversation and he soon found himself extremely interested in what he heard.

"Of course they can't," was the first thing he heard, "we're fur 'nough fr'm the street so't ther' can't nobody see us; 'n' b'sides th' ain't many people goin' past here anyway." The voice was gruff but the tones were subdued apparently by strong effort.

"They might hear us," replied another voice in a very low and slightly trembling tone.

"No they won't; we c'n hear 'em comin' long b'fore they git to the corner 'n' then we'll lay low 'n' stop talkin' t'll they git past."

"All right Art, but I wouldn't want to be caught here with——well, it would be——kind of——."

"Say it right out, Jim,——you wouldn't want to be caught talkin' with me. That's all right. Yer *dear teacher* 'd warm ye good 'n' strong ef he knew ye ever had anythin' t' say t' me."

Harry Dole had by this time recognized the voices

and the names of the speakers, and he became doubly alert.

"No he would n't," was the reply; "he can't do it anyway."

"O, I guess he can all right, only ye dasn't give 'im a chance. They say ye're as meek as Moses sence he yanked ye up on the floor the other day."

Here, an approaching step was heard and the conversation was suspended until it had passed and had died away in the opposite direction. The gruff voice resumed:

"Ef ye was's good at fightin' 's ye be 't sprintin', lord ye'd be a corker. Gosh! ye lit over the ground like a jack rabbit when Stockley took after us to-night."

"You did some pretty swift running too, Art."

"Course I did. I didn't want our little game spoiled by havi-r' him find out who we was, so I stayed behind 'n' knocked the everlasting stuffin' out of 'im. Gosh! I guess he had a chance to study 'stronermey fer 'bout a minute when my fives landed on 'is peepers."

"Did you knock him down?"

"You bet I did."

"Did he get up again?"

"Dunno whether 'e did 'r not; I didn't stay t' raise 'im."

"I hope you didn't kill him."

"Don't fret yer gizzard 'bout that. He'll be bossin' ye 'round ag'in Monday mornin' as chipper as a bantam rooster."

"Do you think he recognized us to-night?"

"Not on yer life. I knocked 'im silly b'fore he c'd see my face."

.

"Well, Art, I must be going. If father looks into my room and finds I'm not there, there'll be the Old Harry to pay."

As James Wakely said this he made a movement to rise, but was promptly grasped by the collar and jerked back.

"No ye don't, Jim, my boy; I won't be thru with ye fer two hours yit. I want to have a long talk with ye."

"Art, I've just *got* to go. If father catches me out he'll ask all sorts of questions. Of course I wouldn't tell him anything, but his suspicions would be aroused, and he might make us lots of trouble. You know he thinks Stockley's all right now."

Arthur seemed impressed with James's reason for going. Without releasing his companion's collar, he pondered a few moments.

"Well, Jim," he said at last, "I've got to have a talk with ye right away. Meet me t'mor' night, 'n' I guess that'll do."

"Tomorrow's Sunday, you know."

"Well, Sissy, you'll be out o' Sunday school before night won't you? Here, Jim, you go to bed early t'mor' night 'n' wait till yer father goes to bed. Then you drop out o' the window down a rope 'n' come to me 'n' I'll tell ye what I want of ye."

"All right, Art, I'll be on hand. Where shall I meet you?"

"Wal," said Arthur, "it wont do to meet here agin; it's too dangerous. What time 'll ye come?"

"Well, father never goes to bed before ten o'clock."

"I'll tell ye what ye do, Jim; you meet me t'mor'

night at eleven o'clock at the River Belle. I've got somethin' up my sleeve for Mr. Rutledge Stockley that 'll give 'im a higher position in this burg than he ever had before."

There was a silence of several seconds.

"Wal, what ye goin' to do?" demanded Arthur in a peremptory tone.

"I'll be there," was the trembling reply.

"Swear it."

"I swear it."

"Say 'I hope to drop dead tomorrer night ef I don't do everything I've promised to do.'"

The imprecation was falteringly repeated.

"Now you get out o' the alley 'n' start fer home. I'll stay here till you're out o' the way."

James reached his room by way of the back stairs before his father had retired and Arthur crept stealthily out of the alley soon after James had started. Twenty minutes later Harry Dole emerged from the front door of the new store and walked rapidly to his home.

The next day was Sunday. According to his custom, Harry Dole attended Morning Prayer at the Episcopal Church, where he was interested in seeing James Wakely, devoutly kneeling, responding, sitting, and rising as prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. After dinner Harry left the house, telling his aged mother that he was going for a walk. By an indirect route he reached a point on the river bluff about a quarter of a mile from the outskirts of the village. Here he turned into a dense wood which covered the slope of the bluff and descended to the river. He soon reached a narrow strip of shore on which rested the

bow of a small dilapidated steamboat, her stern lying in the water. The spot was a secluded one, being screened from observation by the wooded bluff and a bend in the river.

The boat had been used for several seasons in removing snags from the river and had been abandoned on the failure of congressional appropriations for continuing the work. The after part of the boat was covered over so as to form a sort of cabin which had been used as a tool house, dining room, and sleeping quarters for the crew. From the forward part of the cabin rose the pilot house on the sides of which was printed the name of the craft—RIVER BELLE.

Harry climbed to the deck and entered the cabin of the River Belle. The sides were lined with bunks. The room was nearly empty. A rusty stovepipe which ran out of a hole aft had a vertical section reaching within about four and a half feet of the floor. An elbow and two or three lengths of pipe lay in one of the bunks. The pipe interested Harry. In one place he found that two lengths were slightly apart and he pressed them firmly together. Mounting to the deck, he leaned over the stern and examined the projecting stove pipe. Going back to the cabin, he fitted the extra elbow into a section of pipe and returning fixed them to the projecting portion so as to make the open end of the upright length extend downward within a short distance of the water. Examining his completed work, he nodded his head and smiled, muttering, "I guess that'll fix the thing all right."

As he jumped off the boat to return to town, his eye caught a pile of cracker boxes which had belonged

to the victualing department of the River Belle before she was put out of commission. He looked at them thoughtfully for a few moments, then quickly threw two of them aboard and climbed up to the deck again, taking with him a good-sized stone which he had selected after a short search on the shore. He easily found some rusty nails on deck, and taking the boxes into the cabin he nailed them securely to the floor, using the stone as a hammer. He had placed the boxes four feet apart on opposite sides of a point directly under the vertical section of stove pipe. He then looked slowly around as if to think whether he could do anything more to contribute to the comfort of expected guests. Apparently satisfied with his preparations, he again leaped ashore and returned home, retracing the route he had taken in approaching the river.

He remained quietly at home until half past nine in the evening, when he again went out, wearing a waterproof coat and rubber boots (for a heavy rain was falling) and taking with him half a dozen padlock keys from a pan of odds and ends in the barn.

By ten o'clock, he was half a mile up the river fitting a key to the padlock which secured a stout skiff to a stake on the bank and a few moments later he was floating down a madly-rushing river, enveloped in black darkness. By some mysterious sense he knew when he passed the village. Had he been asked how he managed to draw in to the shore so as to run just under the stern of the River Belle, he could only have replied: "I jest *knew* that was the place,—I sort o' *seen* th' ole Belle 'thout *seein'* of 'er." He quickly caught hold of the steering gear of the Belle and with

some difficulty secured the boat to it. Reaching his hand upward, he was pleased to find the exterior vertical section of stovepipe about where he had planned to have it, that is, over the center of his boat. He was now ready for business. No sound was to be heard but the steadily falling rain, and Harry composed himself to wait for the balance of the juncto of which he had elected himself an honorary member.

Fully half an hour passed when suddenly there came to the listener a distinct sound of stumbling and falling, followed by an angry oath. Harry was promptly on his feet with his ear at the open end of the stove pipe. In a few seconds the pipe brought to him a single word in a rough but carefully modulated voice.

"Jim?"

There was no reply.

James Wakely performed his religious duties that Sabbath day with unaccustomed fidelity. He remained quietly at home all the afternoon, reading the latest number of *The Churchman*.

After dark he smuggled a stout rope into his room from the barn and made one end fast to his bed post. A remarkably interesting book detained him in the sitting room until the rest of the family had retired and he soon afterwards went to his room. Carefully opening his bedroom window after a half hour interval, he slid down the rope and reached the ground in safety.

The misguided youth did not feel like a conspirator

such as he had read of in that renowned work "The Bravo of Venice." He felt rather like a forlorn, bullied, and soon-to-be-bedraggled naughty boy. And besides all this his conscience troubled him.

It is remarkable how the activity of conscience increases as danger and difficulties accumulate in the path of a nefarious schemer. James Wakely's spirit was not composed of the stuff that plotters, even of the yellow novel variety are made of. He lacked courage, steadfastness, and initiative. In his relation to Arthur Blazer he might be likened to a trembling, half-drowned mouse tossed about and bitten by a playful cat.

James had taken an umbrella with him, but the wind turned it wrong side out before he had gone twenty paces from his father's gate, and after trying in vain to restore it, he dropped it over a fence into a neighbor's yard. It was not a favorable night for pedestrians but he encountered two, and in each case he made a wide detour through the mud of the street to avoid being seen. Before reaching the river the cold rain had wet him to the skin. His conviction was strong that he was very culpable in lending himself to anything that would injure his teacher, who had only the best feeling for him. He threaded his way along a narrow, winding path overhung with branches of trees and bordered by hazel bushes which gave him innumerable chilling shower baths as his hat and his coat disturbed them. The belief forced itself upon him that it was positively wicked for him to consort with a ruffian like Arthur Blazer. In the cabin of the River Belle, he would at least be shelter-

ed, he thought, from the pelting rain, and the thought quickened his pace. Just as he broke into a run where the path seemed clear, his toe caught a projecting root and he measured his full length upon the soggy ground. When he arose, with the mud clinging to his hands and dripping from his face, his heart was filled with a sense of the enormity of his contemplated villainy and an impulse seized him to return home, renounce his evil companion and his works, and become a sober, honest, dutiful, obedient, studious boy. But there was Arthur to reckon with, who was doubtless already waiting for him at the River Belle, now not more than ten or twelve rods away; and—more terrible—there was his oath. The latter consideration braced up his vacillating conscience and he plunged forward. Five minutes later Arthur was pulling him up to the deck of the River Belle and the two boys entered the cabin.

“Say, Art,” said James in a half whisper, “I’ll catch my death o’ cold if I stay here, and besides I don’t really like—”

“Speak up so’t I c’n hear ye,” interrupted Arthur, with no effort to soften his voice. “What is it ye don’t reely like?”

“Well, you see, it seems a little dangerous for us to be planning to injure a citizen of Minnesota, and—”

“O, you go and soak yer head,” exclaimed the disgusted chief. “Ye can’t back out now, ’n’ you’re goin’ t’ do your share, ye c’n jist set that down whare ye won’t fergit it.”

After some groping in the dark to find a place to sit down, Arthur ran against the cracker boxes and

the boys were soon seated on them, facing each other.

"Oo-oo-oo," shuddered James, "I wish we could have a fire; I'm chilled through and through!" His chattering teeth bore testimony to the truth of what he said.

"Here, take a sup o' this," said Arthur, drawing a flask from his pocket and pushing it through the darkness into the shaking hand of his vis-a-vis.

A long gurgling sound was sufficient evidence that the offer of refreshment was accepted. Arthur took the bottle back and returned it to his pocket without tasting its contents. Drinking was not one of his vices.

"Now," resumed the archconspirator, "ther ain't no need 'f us stayin' here very long. I come here so't we c'd talk 'thout nobody seein' 'r hearin' us, 'n' ye don't wan' t' be 'fraid t' talk right up."

"I'm not afraid," was the prompt reply. James was growing warm. His shivering had nearly ceased; his courage was rising and his conscience was quieting down.

"All right," resumed Arthur. "Ef ye ain't 'fraid you won't be scart o' doin' your share in comin' up 'th Stockley, 'nd I had ye come here t' night to tell ye what your share is. Now, Jim Wakely, what I wan' t' know is, whether you're goin' into this bus'ness fer all yer worth, 'r whether yer goin' to hold back 'n' be sulky 'n' mean 'bout it."

"Art," exclaimed James, "I'm right with you. Stockley has held me up to ridicule before the entire school and I'm ready to do anything to show that I

can't be treated in that way, and he go scot free. Say,—give me another little sup of that whiskey; I feel just a little chilly yet."

The bottle was produced, and James inverted it over his backward-tilted head. The gurgle that ensued seemed likely to continue indefinitely, but it was suddenly interrupted by Arthur, who seized the bottle and drew it away.

"I ain't goin' t' have you gittin' drunk," he remarked, "'n' haf t' be carried home 'n' wake yer folks up gittin' into the house 'n' give the hull thing away."

"That's right, Arthur," replied James, cheerfully. "I know when I've had enough."

"So do I" growled Arthur, "now listen to me. You and me 's goin' to blow that schoolmaster up."

"Blow him up?"

"Yes, blow 'im up—that's what I said; we're goin' to blow him 'n' 'is chair 'n' 'is desk 'n' the hull shoot'n match right up t' the top o' the school house."

"How are you going to do it?" asked James.

"You mean how're *we* goin' to do it—that's what ye mean, ain't it?"

"Why, yes, Arthur, of course that's what I mean, and I want you to understand, Arthur, that I am with you heart and hand, in this business." James was quite sincere in his asseveration. A genial warmth pervaded his system; his courage was high; he regarded Arthur as the prince of good fellows; and his conscience heartily approved what it would have resolutely vetoed half an hour before. It is remarkable how the voice of conscience changes with changes of

environment. Propositions which in discouraging circumstances it turns down in gruffest notes are approved in dulcet tones under the influence of agreeable animal sensations from without and within. James was now thoroughly committed to any scheme Arthur might be pleased to propose—even before learning its details. How his conscience would have goaded him again if in the light of some magical X ray, he could have seen his voice and Arthur's rise eighteen inches in the vertical stovepipe opening directly over their heads, travel through the horizontal section to the elbow outside, and then drop, clear and strong into Harry Dole's attentive ear. The pipe made a perfect speaking tube and Harry was delighted with the success of his afternoon tinkering. But of this both James and Arthur were blissfully unconscious.

James's declaration of allegiance was just what Arthur had counted on when he had administered the stimulant. His aim now was to accomplish two things before the spirit evoked by the liquor had subsided,—to get James's full approval of his scheme and to obtain his written promise to support it.

"You're the right stuff," said he, "now here's our plan. I've managed to git a twenty-five pound keg o' blastin' powder from the quarry. We're goin' t' put that anunder the schoolhouse whair th' master's desk is, 'n' then we're goin' to run a fuse back to your desk, 'n' then you're goin' to touch it off 'n' blow ol' Stockley up to the ceilin'."

"But that will blow me up and the whole school."

"No, it won't; we'll loosen a board anunder your

desk 'n' have the fuse come just anunder it 'n' you'll just lift the board 'n' strike a match 'n' set fire to it when the scholars 's marchin' out when school lets out 'n the afternoon, 'n' then you'll march out behind the rest 's big 's life, 'n' five minutes after, bang! goes the powder, 'n' up goes mister dude, 'n' me 'n' you'll be watchin' the fun from the hay loft by Baldritt's barn acrost the street."

"But you don't —er—we don't want to kill him."

"Thunder! no, that won't kill 'im. It'll jest *surprise* 'im, ha! ha! 'n' turn 'im over 'n' over three or four times, 'n' scorch 'is close 'n' 'is hair a little, hà! ha! ha! 'n' it'll learn 'im who to monkey with. Gosh! I c'n see 'im now a leggin' out o' that schoolhouse 's if the devil was after 'im, 'is close a smokin' 'n' him a-hollerin' fer help, ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"

"How are you—we going to get the powder and the fuse under the schoolhouse?" asked James.

"I'll see to that. I hain't been layin' 'round doin' nothin'. I know all 'bout how that schoolhouse 's made. The joice anunder the floor runs lengthways from the front t' the back, 'n' ye c'n crawl in anunder the front door steps, 'n' have a clear space to put the powder keg 'n' run the fuse back t' your desk. We'll haf' t' build a wall all 'round the keg t' keep the strength of the powder fr'm scatterin', but I'll do all that; all you've got t' do is t' set fire t' the fuse when the time comes."

"Are you sure we won't be committing murder in doing this?" anxiously asked James.

"Sure we won't. I've studied it all out. It'll only give 'im a good scare."

Arthur really believed what he said but he was laboring under a terrible mistake. In pursuing his inquiries upon the effects of blasting powder he had exercised great caution and had drawn erroneous conclusions from the fragments of facts he had learned. He had not dared, of course, in questioning experts at the quarry, to suppose a situation just like that he was now arranging. He was really ignorant of the fact that the execution of the plan he had just unfolded meant death to its victim.

"Well," said James, "I'm willing to set the fuse going; when will it be ready?"

"In just five days. Next Friday night when the master dismisses school, you drop a book 'n' then reach down 'n' lift the board 'n' set fire t' the fuse 'n' put the board back, 'n' march out like a nice boy 'n' then skin out 'n' come t' Baldritt's barn by the back way."

James's courage had by this time begun to settle again and his conscience to prick but he assented to Arthur's plan. He shivered a little, however, and at Arthur's suggestion replenished his courage from the flask "to keep out the chill."

"Now," said Arthur, "what ye're willin' t' say in words ye're of course willin' to say in writin'."

He produced a candle from his pocket, lighted it, and then handed James a paper to read.

"Do you suppose I'm going to sign that paper?" exclaimed James, after reading it.

His courage was again rising. "If you do," he continued, "you're mightily mistaken. You want to

make me responsible for this whole business while you go scot free."

Arthur saw that he had gone a little too far. As he was to have the custody of the paper, no harm could result from his signing it with James.

"Why Jim," he said, "of course I'm goin' to sign it with you. As soon as we've had our fun, I'll tear it up."

The boys now, with pen and ink bought by Arthur for the purpose, affixed their signatures to a paper in which they agreed to blow the school teacher up with a keg of powder as specified in their oral agreement.

They then rose and started for home, and James reached his room without discovery.

It took Harry Dole a much longer time to row back to the ferry than it had taken to make the descent, and it was nearly five o'clock Monday morning when he laid his head upon his pillow.

Arthur had, a week before, selected a hiding place for the agreement he had determined to make James sign. On Monday, he walked to the quarry where he was employed. Passing through a grove he paused at the foot of a large oak. Looking around to assure himself that he was alone, he climbed the tree to a hole about ten feet from the ground. Into this hole he thrust a folded paper which he drew from his pocket. It was the written agreement, which he purposed using as a club to insure the fidelity of his confederate.

CHAPTER XIII

SELF GOVERNMENT

He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city.
—*Bible.*

It will be remembered that before closing school on the evening of his trip to Heavitree, Stockley had directed the pupils to go on with their studies on Monday morning in case of his failure to arrive by the usual time for opening. It was about half past nine on Monday morning when Mr. Harkins stopped his team several blocks away from the schoolhouse for Stockley to alight. The schoolmaster had told Mr. Harkins that he preferred to walk to the schoolhouse.

"It will not be at all out of my way to drive there," protested the superintendent, "and you are already behind time."

"I very much prefer not to ride to the door," was the reply; "in fact I do not care to have the boys and girls know of my return until I open the door upon them."

"Will not such a course lead your pupils to believe that you distrust them and tend to alienate their regard for you? To drive boldly to the door and enter after the scholars have had warning of your coming,—such a course, it seems to me, would be more likely to commend you to the good will of these young people. Pope, in his translation of the *Odyssey*, makes the blind minstrel say that:

"'A decent boldness ever meets with friends.'"

"I fully appreciate the force of what you say," replied Stockley, "and I heartily concur in the spirit of your suggestion. It is due to your friendly interest that I explain my plan and my motive. I shall not go to the schoolhouse as a spy; I shall not peep through the keyhole nor apply my ear to it. I am not hoping or expecting to find the room or a single pupil in disorder. In fact I expect to find, on opening the door, that every pupil is engaged in his legitimate work. I simply wish to give myself the satisfaction of finding that my confidence in these pupils is well placed."

"But will not the scholars suspect your unheralded coming to be an insidious attempt to entrap them?"

"I think not. Should such an idea suggest itself to any of them, it would be effectively negated by the reflection that I have always been honest and frank in my dealings with them. But that there may be no possibility of the suspicion referred to in your question, I shall later in the day, tell them all about my plan for entering unannounced, and give them my reason for it."

"It will be an extraordinary exhibition of self control," said the superintendent, "if, as you expect, your pupils are all found pursuing their appointed tasks on your entrance."

"There is, of course, a possibility of my disappointment," was the reply. "Will you not walk over to the building with me and note the result of the experiment? If it fail, I must simply modify my plan of training and wait longer for a favorable result."

The two men alighted and after securing the horses started for the schoolhouse.

"You refer to a 'plan of training' " resumed Mr. Harkins. "Am I to infer that you have adopted a system for teaching self government?"

"Yes, that is just what I have done. My theory is that young people should receive as regular, systematic, and carefully thought-out lessons in the science, or rather the practice (the science is for the teacher,—the practice for the pupils) of self government as in arithmetic, geography, or any other subject taught in school. My present experiment will be a test— not necessarily a conclusive one—of the soundness of my theory."

"Your theory seems a sound one, Mr. Stockley," said the official, now thoroughly interested, "I am curious to know the steps by which you developed or applied your theory in practice."

"Steps is a good word," was the reply. "The first step was to leave the room for two minutes, asking from the pupils a promise of good order during my absence. The test was purposely made short and easy. It was a lesson in the primer of self government. The second and third steps were to absent myself for five and ten minutes, saying that I was going to visit Miss Dix's room. In these instances no promises were exacted; the pupils were told that I was *confident* their own pride would insure their doing what was right. I am satisfied that they learned these elementary lessons well. The fourth step was to go to your home with the understanding on the part of the pupils that I was liable to be late this morning.

Not a word was said to them on the subject of order. This is about a sixth-grade lesson in self government. We shall now see whether they have learned it well."

The two men were now ascending the front steps of the schoolhouse. They had approached the building in such a manner that it would have been impossible for any inmate to know of their coming. They paused a moment at the door. There was profound silence within. Stockley then quietly opened the door and the two entered the room. The pupils looked up for a moment and then resumed the study which had occupied them before the teacher's arrival. Mr. Harkins had sent a searching glance around the room and had not detected a sly wink or any appearance of sudden return from mischief to study.

"Verily, my friend," said he in an undertone to Stockley, "it may be said of your experiment that *finis coronat opus tuum*¹; in other words, your experiment has resulted in gratifying success. And now I must bid you good day."

The visitor withdrew and the teacher took up the labors of the day.

The teacher noticed in the course of one of the recitations, that James Wakely was unusually thoughtful. He seemed to be preoccupied, and several times when addressed he started and looked frightened as if he had been detected in some forbidden act. He was slightly pale and very quiet. Two or three times during the day he fell asleep with his head on his desk, and when awakened by a nudge from his seat

¹The end crowns your work

mate he caught his breath with a start and looked quickly about him like one who expects an attack. Once while he was sleeping, the boy who shared his seat heard him mumuring, and caught the words "that . . . murder . . . chilly . . ." When school closed he started at once for home without exchanging a word with any of his schoolmates.

By nine o'clock that evening Harry Dole was lying comfortably on the hay in the loft of Mr. Baldritt's barn. Mr. Baldritt's house was situated just one block east of the schoolhouse, and, like that building, faced the east. The barn, being on the back or western extremity of the lot, was in full view of the front of the schoolhouse, as the western side of the block had no buildings on it. A door or opening for pitching hay into the loft made it possible for an observer to see whatever might be going on about the schoolhouse.

By ten o'clock, when the passing of late home-goers had about ceased, Harry saw a solitary figure carrying some bulky object under one arm steal up to the schoolhouse and disappear under the front steps. Half an hour later the figure emerged and started toward the village. He no longer carried the bulky object. Harry quickly left the barn and sped, by a circuitous route, to a point whence he could see what he recognized as the same figure coming down the hill toward him from the direction of the schoolhouse. He retreated, and managed to come face to face with the night worker in the light shining dimly from a saloon. He was not surprised when he recognized Arthur Blazer.

CHAPTER XIV

AWAKENING A SLUGGARD

As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

—*The Ancient Mariner.*

“James Duke.”

It was the teacher who spoke. The grammar class occupied the recitation seats facing his desk. The exercise consisted in changing certain passages so as to give the verbs a different grammatical voice without changing the sense. Four or five sentences had been disposed of by as many pupils whose names the teacher had called in promiscuous order.

When Mr. Stockley called the name of James Duke, a long and lanky boy partly raised himself from a semi-reclining position and directed a look of sleepy inquiry at the speaker. As he made no further response, the name of Lizzie Dalny was called. Lizzie took up the next sentence in order and the recitation proceeded.

“Maude Clarke.”

Maude understood this as a direction to proceed in regular order, and she did so.

“Eva Black.”

Eva disposed of the next sentence.

“James Duke.”

“Huh?” languidly inquired James, as a drowsy look of interrogation appeared in his half-open eyes.

Mr. Stockley again called on another member of

the class, after waiting several seconds for an answer from James. To repeat the question after it had been distinctly given would, in his judgment, place a premium on inattention, as he had explained to Mr. Dow in connection with the work in spelling, on Visitors' Day. After a few questions had been asked of other pupils, the teacher determined to test James by a very easy question.

"James Duke," he called.

James looked as attentive as his indolent nature would permit.

"Read the next sentence,—the one beginning with *Laziness*."

James read the sentence: "Laziness grows on people."

"In what case is the noun *Laziness*?"

James gave a weary look at the work, yawned, and said, "I don't know."

James did not mean to be impudent. He really liked his teacher, but he was too indolent to think. Hoping to shame him, Stockley passed the question to Maude Clarke, the youngest girl in the class, who promptly gave the correct answer. But James was unmoved. The subdued titter which his exhibition of ignorance evoked from a few boys and girls failed to stir his sluggish soul.

Stockley was for the moment at the end of his resources. But he was not discouraged and he did not fall into the error of showing irritation. He thought and thought. "There must be some way to reach this case," so his thought ran, "and sooner or later I shall discover the right plan." That very af-

ternoon he made the discovery and formed his plan. Just before the afternoon session began, he opened a Fourth Reader that lay on his desk, in order to look over the selection to be read that afternoon. While turning over the pages to find the lesson, his eye caught the caption of one of the lessons. He read the first sentence. "There!" he exclaimed to himself, "that is the stream of cold water I shall use to wake up James Duke!"

The first recitation in the afternoon was that of the A class in arithmetic. Charlie Marfield stood at the blackboard explaining an example in percentage. James Duke sat at his desk near the rear of the room, his elbows on the desk, his chin in his hands, gazing lazily around the room. Stockley stood on the teacher's platform, facing the school.

"Since a remittance of \$1.025 permits an investment of \$1," Charlie was saying, "a remittance of \$875 permits an investment of as many dollars as—"

"James Duke!"

The master's voice had only its ordinary pitch and force, but it was no ordinary proceeding for him to interrupt a pupil, in such an apparently rude manner, with something entirely foreign to the matter under consideration. The effect on the class was almost electrical. All glanced at the teacher, who was leaning slightly to one side, with an intent gaze fixed on the boy addressed, and the next moment the eyes of the entire school were focused on James Duke. The scheme had thus far worked exactly as the teacher had planned. "Success number one," he thought. Without saying, "Silence! look at James Duke!" he

had managed to concentrate upon the sluggard the wondering attention of his schoolmates. James looked up with as much surprise as his lazy nature was capable of feeling. Not more than two seconds were consumed in what it has taken sixty seconds to describe.

"Have you a Fourth Reader?"

"Y-e-s, s-i-r," was the drawling reply. Even James had awakened sufficiently to wonder what was coming.

"Would you be willing to read one sentence in the Fourth Reader for me?"

"Y-e-s, s-i-r."

"Please take your reader, then, and stand in the aisle."

The boy did as requested. He was good natured (in fact, he was too lazy to be otherwise) and had a kindly feeling for his teacher.

"When I give you the page you may turn to it and read. Read first, the title of the selection that begins on the page, and then read, very distinctly, the first sentence."

Expectation was on tiptoe. "What on *earth!*" was the inquiry written on the puckered foreheads of the pupils as they turned their eyes alternately on Stockley and on James Duke.

"What do you understand I ask you to do?" asked Stockley.

"Read the caption and the first sentence," replied James.

"That is right; page 74."

James moistened his fingers and pawed over the leaves of his reader until he had found page 74. When

his eye caught the title of the selection, the red blood surged into his face. For the first time that term, he was ashamed. "Success number two," said Stockley to himself; "I have actually stirred up his sense of shame!"

"Kindly read the title of the piece," said Stockley. By this time the pupils were leaning almost out of their seats in their eagerness to hear what was coming. James drawled out the caption:

A HUMAN BEING WITH NOTHING TO DO

A second later the school was in a roar of laughter. "Success number three," was the teacher's mental comment. He wanted James to realize that his laziness was unanimously regarded as ridiculous. He did not wish James to feel, however, that his teacher was deliberately holding him up as a laughing stock. Raising his hand as a signal for silence, he said, "Please read the first sentence, James." Again James read:

"Most miserable, worthy of profound pity is such a being."

No rapping on the desk or ringing of the desk bell could have restrained the uproarious and continued laughter that followed. As soon as he could be heard, the teacher said to the school:

"Don't you pity poor James? He has *nothing to do*."

"Yes!" the pupils shouted.

"I don't think he will need your pity any longer," said Stockley, "for I believe he will find something to do for the rest of the day; now let us resume our regular work."

He at once directed Charlie Marfield to resume

the explanation of the problem in commission and refrained from looking directly at James. Out of one corner of his eye, however, he saw James dive into his desk for a grammar and begin to study in earnest. The boy had been thoroly awakened for that day at least. "Fourth and final success," silently said the teacher.

James studied faithfully all the afternoon and the next forenoon (Wednesday). While the A class in arithmetic was reciting on Wednesday afternoon, James dropped into his old, lazy attitude—his elbows on his desk, his chin in his hands. Lizzie Dalny was reciting:

"The present worth of an amount due at some future time without interest is such a sum as—"

"James Duke!"

The teacher used exactly the same tone as the day before. Again all eyes were directed at James.

"Have you a Fourth Reader?"

James's only reply was to grab a book and begin to study. The effect of this second lesson lasted two days. A third allusion to the Fourth Reader completed the cure. Whenever he showed disinclination to exertion on the playground, the boys would shout: "James Duke, have you a Fourth Reader?" James became a diligent student and made good records in his studies.

"I would have caned the boy," said a fellow teacher, to whom Stockley related the incident; "The mental whip you applied was far more severe than the application of the birch."

Stockley had the satisfaction, however, of know-

ing that the whip he had used had accomplished the desired result, and that instead of alienating the good will of the boy, it had increased his respect and friendship for his teacher.

The only member of the Green Valley school who had failed to appreciate the humor of the James Duke incident on that Tuesday afternoon was James Wakely. His mind was so filled with the thought that only three days thence he would be compelled by a written promise to enact what might prove the part of Second Murderer in a real tragedy that he was in no mood for merriment. Stockley noticed his gravity and attributed it to the inherent sullenness of his disposition.

That night Harry Dole occupied again his post of observation in the Baldritt barn. A few minutes after ten he again saw a boy approaching the school house. He had no difficulty in recognizing him as one who had placed some bulky object, whose character he could easily guess, under the building the night before. He had no doubt as to the identity of this boy who furiously skulked along the street and across the playground in the shadows, but he seriously doubted whether his testimony upon the identity of the person seen at night by a dim light would be conclusive in a court of law. He had therefore determined that this time he would keep his man in sight from the time he left the school building until he should be able to see his face in a strong light. To that end he had planned to slide down a rope from the door in the loft, and at that door he was keeping his vigil. The man under surveillance appeared to be carrying several boards or pieces of plank two or three feet in length. These

he pushed under the steps before crawling under, himself. His work took more time than the night before. A little before twelve his head appeared at the opening through which he had entered. Harry grasped his rope. The body worked out into the open and stood erect. After a cautious glance around it started down the street. The watcher promptly slid down the rope—his side of the barn being in shadow—and stealthily followed without losing sight, for a single moment, of the person he was after. From tree to tree and from house to house he continued the pursuit until the person ahead had reached the principal business block. Harry then quickened his pace, walking upon the sidewalk with no attempt at concealment. As Arthur came into the brilliant light shining through the windows of Jake Rice's saloon, a loud voice immediately behind him called out, "Hello, Will!" The salutation was so evidently addressed to him that he stopped and looked around.

"Oh!" said Harry, "it ain't Will Fulton after all; I see now; it's Arthur Blazer. How's things up to the quarry now days?"

"All right," growled Arthur.

"Don't ye most wish ye's back 'n school agin?"

"No, I don't"; and he shuffled along out of the light.

Harry was satisfied. He was now able to state positively that the person with whom he had talked was the one who had come from under the schoolhouse; that he had recognized him in a strong light as Arthur Blazer; and that when addressed by that name he had not denied the identity. He determined to keep his

own counsel and to appear at the schoolhouse a little before "lettin' out time" on Friday in season to prevent James from lighting the fuse. He could, of course, stop the progress of the mischief at any moment by exposing the plot and putting the master on his guard, but to do so would ruin the dramatic climax he had planned and so deprive him of "a heap o' fun." He had not yet decided whether he would swear out a warrant for the boy's arrest. That would depend on developments.

CHAPTER XV

EUCLID BY MOONLIGHT

To behold the wandering moon
Riding near her highest noon

—*Il Penseroso.*

A se, non per scholam, eruditus

—*John S. Clarke*

Lois Dix, teacher of the primary department in the Green Valley school, lived with her widowed mother in an attractive little cottage not far remote from the business center of the village. Lois was bright, vivacious, and twenty. Mrs. Dix was industrious, clever, and fifty. Mother and daughter were confidential friends, and Lois found in the elder woman a sympathetic listener to her comments on society, school, books, church, and life in general. Mrs. Dix was not a gossip, and her daughter did not hesitate to repeat to her many incidents of school life which it would have been imprudent to speak of elsewhere. By this means Mrs. Dix had not only become familiar with Lois's experiences in her own department of the school but had acquired a knowledge of much that had occurred in the grammar school department. Her predilection for the new principal, based on what Lois had told her, had developed into a decidedly favorable impression upon meeting and speaking with him.

Stockley had not made a formal call at the home of his assistant, but he had sometimes stopped, when passing the house, to exchange greetings with the two

ladies, whom he found, on such occasions, among the flowers in the front yard or at their sewing on the front porch.

"Mother," said Lois, one evening after tea, "I'm going to run up to Lottie Wildon's; I won't be gone more than an hour or two. Lottie wanted me to show her about some embroidery for Christmas presents."

Mr. Wildon's house was on the hill, distant half a mile or more, but the streets and byways of Green Valley were regarded as safe at all hours of day and night and Mrs. Dix made no objection to the evening visit which her daughter proposed.

Lois started on her return home about nine o'clock. She had passed a pleasant evening, and now, under the inspiration of crisp, frosty air and brilliant moonlight, her heart sang merrily and she hummed aloud a song she had been teaching the school children that day. She had noticed that a man was walking some distance ahead of her and in the same direction. His hands appeared to be clasped behind his back, his pace was slow, and his bent head indicated a thoughtful mood. At the sound of her humming he stopped and faced partly about as if listening. He appeared to recognize Lois's voice, for after a moment's hesitation he turned to meet her. His manner underwent a complete change as he advanced. His pace was no longer slow and the bright moonlight fell upon a face that indicated a happy and animated rather than a contemplative mood. Lois at once recognized the new principal, and her step was not retarded in the slightest degree as she advanced to meet him.

"Miss Dix!" exclaimed Stockley, "I recognized

your voice at once, but the time of night and your distance from home made me think for a moment that I might be mistaken."

"O, I often run out alone, of an evening," was the reply, "to call on a neighbor, and my calls are more often made in the evening than in the daytime when my time is so taken up with school duties."

"When I heard you singing," said Stockley, somewhat inconsequentially, "there came to mind the words and music of a song I learned when I was a boy," and he sang very softly:

Come, fairies, trip on the grass
With a ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!
And mock dull mortals as they pass
With a ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!
While the stars are shining bright,
We will sing by their sparkling light
With a ho, ho, ho!
With a ho, ho, ho!
With a ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!

"Why, Mr. Stockley, that song doesn't apply to this case at all, pretty as it is; I'm not a"

"Yes, yes," interrupted the principal, "I know what you want to say—that you are 'not a fairy,' that you were 'not tripping it but quietly walking,' that you were 'on the sidewalk' instead of 'on the grass,' that you 'had no idea of mocking' me 'or any other dull mortal,' and that you were 'singing "Lightly row"' and not a ridiculous "ho, ho, ho"'—but that would rob the incident of all its poetry and I don't want you to do that."

"Yes, Mr. Stockley, that is in substance what I intended saying and I confess I can't see any poetry

in humming a school song as one walks along the street on a bright night."

"And you are right. Moonlight and music are only accessories; they quicken the soul-sense and help one to perceive the poetry that is in the life of the singer. Do not think, Miss Dix, that I am becoming too personal. Everyone has something of poetry in his nature. Carlyle says something like this in an essay on Walter Scott. 'There is no life of man, faithfully recorded, but is a heroic poem of its sort, rhymed or unrhymed.' But we are drifting toward sentiment and philosophy. To change the subject, I wish you would walk with me a short distance out of your direct way, so as to pass the schoolhouse. After that I will, with your permission, see you home."

The two had been slowly walking during the foregoing conversation. Lois willingly assented to the proposed detour and they turned toward the scene of their daily labors.

"You seemed very thoughtful when I discovered you ahead of me," began Lois; "would it savor of presumption or extravagance if I were to offer 'a penny for your thoughts'?"

"Of presumption, certainly not; of extravagance, possibly, though my thoughts were of considerable value to myself as brain food and I am not without hope that they will ultimately produce a modest store of pennies for my purse. I was studying my geometry lesson."

"Your geometry lesson! Where's your geometry?" bending forward to see if he carried a book. "How could you study by moonlight, in the open air? Isn't

it ruinous to your eyes? Who's your tea——, but excuse me; I have no right to ask such questions; it seemed so strange for one to study geometry by night, in the street, with his hands behind him and his eyes bent on the ground."

"Your questions are natural and allowable, Miss Dix, and I am glad you asked them, for they give me an opportunity, in answering them, to speak on a subject which, otherwise, I would have found difficult to introduce."

"What on earth does he mean?" thought Lois. A vague feeling of disquiet for which she could not account possessed her for a moment, but it soon gave way to an absorbing interest in the subject of which Stockley spoke.

"I will first give a direct answer to each of your questions," resumed the principal, "and then I want to deliver a lecturette on what the answers suggest."

Miss Dix was still more mystified. What was a lecturette? He seemed to attach an importance to her idle questions far greater, it appeared to her, than belonged to them. She made no reply but wondered what was coming now.

"My geometry," said Stockley, "is in my room at Mr. Dow's. I study it by moonlight, in the open air, by repeating a demonstration and forcing myself to go repeatedly over parts that are not clear, following a logical sequence rather than the language of the text book, constructing the required figure on the ground with a stick or on any scrap of paper I may chance to pick up or to have in my pocket—constructing it, sometimes, in my mind without the aid of visible lines. Such

study does not tax the eyes like poring over a book in order to commit its wording. I am my own teacher. There! your questions are answered. Let me repeat that in asking them you have committed no impertinence, but have rather conferred a favor."

"Thank you very much for your explicit answers," said Lois, "but I didn't really intend to ask questions; I just wondered, and my wonder ran over in words as a glass of soda water runs over in froth."

"I quite understand," said Stockley, "and I'm not quite sure but it is taking an ungenerous advantage of your ingenuous outburst to impose upon you an unsolicited essay on self-instruction. I'm not going to pretend, however, that what I have to say is not worth while, for I believe it is; otherwise, it would be presumptuous to ask you to listen to it."

He paused as if casting about for some appropriate way of beginning. The silence became a little embarrassing to his companion.

"Do tell me about it," she said, at last, "I am really anxious to listen to your 'essay.'"

"You know Frank Courtney, do you not?" asked Stockley.

"Very well."

"Did you know that he had left school?"

"No."

"Yes, he left yesterday. It seems that his father needs his help in the shop, and it is probable that he has reached the end of his school life. After he had gathered up his books at the close of school yesterday, he came to my desk to bid me good bye. He said he had hoped to get at least a high school education, but

that he must now give up the idea of becoming any more of a scholar than he now is. I was sorry to hear him say this, for Frank was one of the most promising boys in my room. He is making the mistake that thousands of capable boys and girls are making—that in order to become a scholar it is necessary to go to school."

"Do you mean that schools are of no use? If that is what you mean, is not your present practice inconsistent with your theory?"

"No, I do not mean that. As society is constituted, primary schools are a necessity; they supply children with the instruments (reading, writing, and the rudiments of fundamental studies) which they need for acquiring scholarship. Technical schools are also essential to the best results—not so much for the work of the professors as for the facilities they afford for the orderly use of libraries, laboratories, machinery, and apparatus, which the single student could not afford. Between the primary and the technical school there is a vast field—the high school and college field—for the exercise of individual effort, a field in which the opportunities are illimitable and the possibilities without measure. What I mean to say is that, in the line of high school and college studies, an ambitious student may attain high, broad, accurate scholarship when circumstances deny him the advantages of the schools. I do not undervalue the laboratory in the study of physics and chemistry, of the living model for pronunciation in the languages, and of the museum in natural history, but the thoroughly earnest student will make opportunities to enjoy these aids on occa-

sion and will acquire more from them in an hour than many a student in daily contact with them will acquire in a month or even a year."

"Would you, then, advise boys and girls to study by themselves instead of attending high school and college?"

"Certainly not. If one 'has it in him' to be a scholar, he will be one in or out of school. The benefits that accrue from association with other students and with scholarly men and women in and out of the classroom are many. I would advise any friend who is in search of such education as the schools can give, to seek it in the schools remembering that he must rely mainly on himself even when in school for acquiring it. No, I have in mind that large number of young people who are lamenting the impossibility of getting an education because circumstances forbid the continuance of their school life."

"You are, yourself, a self-taught man, are you not, Mr. Stockley? Please excuse the seeming impertinence of my question. I am only seeking further light. Your 'essay' has aroused my very hearty interest."

"I'm glad you are interested; in fact, it is mainly to awaken your sympathy that I am expressing my views to you. Yes, so far as I am educated at all, I am, in the main, self-taught. I won't undertake to enumerate the subjects I have mastered (that sounds like a boast but it isn't), but the one in which you surprised me is geometry. I find it very difficult. I am often compelled to read a demonstration through several times in order to follow the reasoning, but the light comes at last, and I then set myself the task of

threading my way through the proposition with different letters to designate the lines and angles. I am very exacting with myself, and what delight there is finally in patting myself on the back and saying, 'Well done, my boy!' Right here is one superiority of this over the class room method: I am not doing a task that has been set me by a master; my recitation is not, like the Israelites' tale of bricks, a burden to bear and then get rid of. It is hard but it is self-imposed and the keen pleasure of discovering some (to me) new geometrical truth more than compensates me for the effort involved."

"I have never studied geometry or even algebra," said Lois; "what principle of geometry were you discovering on the ground when I overtook you?"

"It was this: that in any right triangle, the sum of the squares constructed on the base and the perpendicular is equivalent to a square constructed on the hypotenuse."

"That is all Greek to me; I wish I could understand it."

"Why, look at this," said the principal, holding up a crumpled piece of paper, with some geometrical figures drawn on it in pencil. "Here is the triangle—A B C—and here are the three squares, scratched off on a bit of paper I picked up far out on the prairie. But if you have never studied geometry you would hardly understand the demonstration. The truth expressed in this theorem is said to have been discovered about twenty-five centuries ago by Pythagoras. The discovery so delighted him that he sacrificed a hecatomb to show his gratitude to the gods. I'm not sure

but my own delight in thinking the thoughts of Pythagoras over after him was almost as great as his."

"Mr. Stockley," exclaimed Lois, you are inspiring me with a desire to study geometry and I mean—why! who is that dodging around the corner of the school-house?"

They had reached a point from which they could see the front of the school building, upon which the moon shone bright. As Miss Dix spoke, the figure of a boy slunk furtively around the corner of the schoolhouse and into the shadows out of sight.

"Wait right here," said Stockley; "I'll be back in less than a minute."

He rapidly crossed the street in the direction taken by the retreating figure.

Within the time he had mentioned, he was again by Miss Dix's side and their walk was resumed.

"I found nothing wrong with the building," he said, "it was probably some chance prowler peering into the windows out of sheer curiosity; and yet," he added thoughtfully, "I can't help associating what we have just seen with what I saw or fancied I saw when I passed the building less than an hour ago. It was a man or a boy or the shadow of a cloud, and that is why I asked you to return with me by this circuitous route. If it had been a person intending any harm to the building, the harm would have been done by this time."

The conversation turned to indifferent subjects and the young people were soon at Mrs. Dix's gate.

"And now," said Lois, "I suppose you will resume the study of Pythagoras."

"Or, rather, of Euclid," was the reply. Euclid united in a single book the geometrical discoveries of Pythagoras and others. It was the famous 'forty-seventh problem of Euclid' with which I was struggling when you so pleasantly surprised me. Let me assure you that, thanks to your company and sympathy, I have found Euclid by moonlight more than usually fascinating this evening. But I particularly congratulate myself on the opportunity you have afforded me of giving, in a very brief and imperfect way, some thoughts on self-culture which may possibly be worth thinking about. I know you will not misunderstand me. I do not assume that you are uncultured, neither do I presume to constitute myself your mentor. I mean just this and nothing more: that two congenial persons of intelligence who are ambitious of self-improvement can benefit each other immeasurably by exchanging views. I mustn't keep you out any longer—good night."

"Why, Lois," called Mrs. Dix from her room as her daughter quietly entered the house, "what kept you out so late?"

Lois was annoyed at a feeling of warmth which suffused her face in the darkness as she answered, "I met Mr. Stockley and we walked home past the school-house."

Her mother did not pursue her inquiry.

When Stockley reached his room, he lighted a lamp and seated himself to review the Pythagorean proposition before retiring. Taking from his vest pocket the scrap on which he had drawn the figures, he set himself about its study. A puzzled expression came

into his face. He bent forward and scanned the paper a full minute. Then he leaned back and thought. Half an hour later the troubled look gave place to a smile. He had apparently reached a satisfactory solution.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FUGITIVE

Back to thy punishment,
False fugitive, and to thy speed add wings.
Milton

Mrs. Dow's scheme for subjecting Stockley to her control and that of her husband had completely failed. She had tried to patronize him at home and in society and while he had not administered any marked rebuff, she recognized in his dignified but courteous manner a self-determining spirit which would not yield to her social leadership. She had tacitly assigned to him a position in her train at choir rehearsals, church sociables, and other gatherings, but he had declined the honor with a bonhomie in which there was just a trace of hauteur. One of the prominent traits in Mrs. Dow's character was persistence. When she set about the accomplishment of a given purpose, her tenacity did not weaken under discouragements. Many ordinary women possess this trait. But Mrs. Dow was not an ordinary woman. Had she been such, she would have subjected herself to the humiliation of fighting a series of losing battles after losing the campaign. Like a skilful general, she knew when she was defeated and she wisely retreated in time to save herself from social annihilation.

Stung by her defeat, she determined to humiliate the upstart whom she had not succeeded in making her vassal. She confided her plan to a few of her

familiars in order that, when the blow should fall, she might be recognized as the one who had delivered it.

Stockley had entertained, for some time, the purpose of returning to the hotel as a boarder. He felt that he was in a false position at Mr. Dow's. People were saying that Mr. Dow was "running the school" and that the teacher would naturally regard himself as under obligation to conduct it according to the ideas and caprices of the man and woman whose house sheltered him. Stockley was not disposed to truckle to popular fancies but he was wise enough to know that public opinion ought to receive some recognition.

Having come to the conclusion that he ought to change his boarding place, he sought Mrs. Dow and announced his determination to her together with his reasons.

"You and Mr. Dow have made it very pleasant for me here," he said; "it was very thoughtful and kind in you to take me into your family; and I can not hope to find elsewhere the advantages I have enjoyed here, but in view of the circumstances as I have explained them to you, you will agree with me, I am sure, that it is wise to change."

To say that Mrs. Dow was thunderstruck would be to express her feeling but faintly. She was mortified, chagrined, furious. This was the coup she had reserved for the discomfiture of the enemy, and he had stolen a march upon her, had wrested her weapon from her and had given her with it the coup de grace.

What should she say? She had announced pri-

vately that she was going to "fire Stockley" that very evening. The truth that he had voluntarily renounced his boarding place would become known and society would understand that he had outwitted her. So ran her thoughts. She could see no escape from her dilemma, and she wisely decided to accept the situation gracefully. By a strong effort she so far controlled her fury as to keep it out of her face and voice.

"Very well, Mr. Stockley," she said, "perhaps the step you propose is best. When shall you leave us?"

"To-night."

That night he slept at the Excelsior Hotel.

The day following the removal just recorded was Friday—the time chosen for the execution of the plot which had been concocted in the cabin of the old River Belle. Harry Dole was on the alert. He knew that Arthur Blazer met James Wakely for a short conference in a hazel thicket when the latter was on his way to school in the morning. He swore out warrants for the arrest of the two boys and placed them in the hands of the sheriff with the understanding that the matter was to be kept secret and that the papers were to be served only in case of necessity. He knew that James sped to Arthur's home for a five-minutes interview at the noon hour and that he emerged from the house with white lips and an anxious face. But he did not know James's errand at Arthur's house. Had he known that, he would have deemed it his duty to forestall the coming catastrophe by an immediate arrest of the two conspirators.

Just before the close of the forenoon session, the principal had made a special announcement to the school.

"You will remember, scholars," he said, "the announcement I made about two weeks ago, that when three days should pass without a single case of tardiness, I would close school half an hour earlier on the next afternoon. There was not a case of tardiness on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday; and so, according to promise, you will be dismissed at half past three this afternoon."

The pupils exchanged smiling glances and went home in a merry mood for their noonday meal. James promptly sought Arthur to consult with him on the change of time, which he hoped might indefinitely defer the explosion, which was to have taken place at four o'clock.

"Art," he said, after he had hurriedly explained the change of time, "hadn't we better give the whole thing up?—or put it off a while?" he added, seeing an ugly scowl on Arthur's face.

"Ye cowardly skunk," growled Arthur, "I jest want you to remember that I've got a paper with your name on it that says that you'll blow the ol' cuss up. D'you want a constable t'see that paper?"

"Of course not, Art, I'm ready to do my part"—his voice shook as he spoke—"but I thought as the time was changed and our plans were kind of upset."

"No they ain't upset neither. Ye blame fool, what dif'rnce does it make whether the thing's touched off at four or half past three? I'll be at Baldritt's barn

at quarter past three and young man you jest light that fuse on schedule time by the new time table."

James was unable to eat a mouthful of food at dinner, and said, in answer to an inquiry from his mother, that he had "a kind of a stomach ache."

At three o'clock that afternoon, Arthur Blazer was in the loft of the Baldritt barn. Half an hour later, he saw the children pouring out of the schoolhouse door, the younger ones shouting and leaping with glee at their early release. In two minutes, every pupil, excepting James, had left the building and was out of sight. Where was James! He should have been, by this time, in Baldritt's barn, on the hay beside his pal, waiting to see the fun when the light on the burning fuse should have reached the powder. A startling thought seized upon Arthur and forced the cold sweat from every pore. "Has the cowardly pup given me away to save him...."; his anger was turned to horror when a blood-curdling shriek rent the air and a cloud of thick smoke came pouring from the schoolhouse door. Without waiting to see whether the two victims were able to crawl from the building, he sprang to his feet, leaped down the stairs, and shot out of the barn door on the side farthest from the schoolhouse.

His eyes rapidly scanned the immediate neighborhood. No one was in sight. The boy skulked along behind some bushes, reached the street, and fled from the vicinity, hardly knowing where he went.

About quarter before four that Friday afternoon, sheriff McKelvy while strolling along the main business street of Green Valley, saw, a block or two ahead

of him, a man or a large boy walking rapidly toward the open country. As near as the sheriff could make out, the man ahead of him had red hair and shabby clothes. He cast furtive glances behind him as he moved swiftly along the road and seemed trying to escape observation. Reaching a cross road, he quickly turned the corner and disappeared behind a barn. At this moment a heavy hand was laid on the sheriff's shoulder and he turned to look into the agitated face of Harry Dole.

"McKelvy," whispered Harry in great excitement, "did ye see that fel'r skip 'round the corner by Kennedy's barn? That's Art and he's leggin' it to get out o' town. Somethin's happened and I'm goin' right up to the schoolhouse to see what's the matter. You better git right after that boy and slap the warrant onto 'im before he gits away."

Without waiting for a reply, Harry turned and started at a swift pace for the schoolhouse. He feared that by some accident the mine had been exploded prematurely and that he might be too late to save the unsuspecting schoolmaster. He had accidentally caught sight of the fugitive as he was about to start for the schoolhouse and his timely meeting with the sheriff left him free to hurry to the scene of the expected explosion, assured that the principal in the conspiracy would be taken care of by the proper officer of the law.

McKelvy hastened to the corner around which the fugitive had disappeared, just in time to see his quarry running at utmost speed across the prairie. The next minute, the sheriff strode into Bert Bender's

livery stable. "Bert," he said, quietly, "throw a saddle on old Dan quicker'n lightning!" Eighty seconds later, old Dan was trotting out of the stable with the sheriff on his back.

The fleeing man was still in sight. At a word and a shake of the bridle reins, Dan sped after him across the open prairie. The hunted one glanced back and increased his speed. The sheriff was surprised to see him change his course. He had been heading, at first, for the wooded swamp that bordered Run river, not far from the village. He appeared to change his mind on finding that he was pursued, for, on reaching the road that ran parallel to the river he turned sharply and sped along the road. Major Murfin's house was not far away. Reaching it he ran through the wide gateway and disappeared in the barn.

The sheriff was checked. His mount could not clear the fence and he did not know which way to go to find the bars. He was compelled to alight, tie his horse, and demolish a length of fence. When he rode through the gap he saw the red headed fugitive flying along the road ahead, mounted on Major Murfin's best horse. "It's nip and tuck now," was McKelvy's mental comment: "Old Dan's a good traveler, but if he overtakes the major's Terror, it'll have to be by some strategy that I can't quite figure out this minute. Perhaps the vicious brute'll throw the boy."

The runaway was evidently a good rider. Terror had started out at a rapid gait and in response to the words and strokes of his rider he steadily increased his distance from the pursuing officer.

Ten minutes passed. Both horses were going like

mad and the officer of the law was being gradually left behind. Suddenly his face brightened and he gave a suppressed cry of exultation.

Half a mile ahead of the flying boy the road made a sharp turn to the right and bent again to the left at the end of another half mile.

The two horsemen were separated by a distance of about a quarter of a mile. The sheriff conceived the idea of riding across the country on the hypotenuse of the right triangle of which the half-mile sections the fugitive must cover were the legs. He had never heard of the forty-seventh problem of Euclid but he made a rough calculation that if he could clear a low place in the fence and put his horse to his best speed, he could intercept his man at the second turning, notwithstanding the fact that the latter was mounted on the swifter horse. To accomplish this result he must have a clear track across the fields and his horse must make his maximum speed. He figured that two factors in the problem were in his favor: first, that Arthur did not know the country and would not dare to leave the traveled road for fear of finding an impassable place; second, that Arthur would inevitably lose time in slowing up to make the turns. He calculated that if a certain swampy tract lying across his path and known as the "big slough" was dry, he could reach the second turning about thirty seconds in advance of the boy. This would give him time to throw himself from the back of Old Dan, tear down a corner of rail fence, and confront the fugitive with a fence rail.

This train of thought which has consumed seventy-

five seconds in the reading, passed through the mind of the sheriff in one-fifteenth of that time. Before the completion of the fifth second, Dan had leaped a low place in the fence and was bearing his rider at breakneck speed across the country.

The fugitive lost time at the turning as the sheriff had supposed he would. He cast a rapid glance, as he turned, along the road he had just covered. No horseman was to be seen! It took him but an instant to guess the truth in regard to the tactics of his pursuer, although the latter was hidden by intervening bushes and trees. The thought was a spur. He lashed his horse with the halter end. Every second he left two rods behind. It was the best that Terror could do.

In the meantime Old Dan was carrying his rider straight toward the point where the latter had planned to bring his man to bay. He was confident he could accomplish his purpose, provided the "big slough" was passable. A slight rise of ground gave him full view of the slough. It was full of water! He did not slacken his horse's speed, for, although he hardly expected, now, to catch Arthur at the bend in the road, he hoped something might happen to terminate the chase at a small railway station not far distant.

He rode around the slough and reached the road in time to see the man he had failed to intercept in full career toward the station. A freight train stood on the main track. The fugitive guided his horse into a fence corner near the engine, threw himself off, ran to the rear of the tender and uncoupled

it from the car behind, rushed forward, and sprang up the steps of the cab of the locomotive.

All this Sheriff McKelvy saw while flying toward the little station on the back of Old Dan. He could not see what happened in the cab, but to his utter chagrin he saw the engine start, gather speed, and glide away from the station, bearing with it the person he had set out to capture. When he leaped upon the station platform he found the agent gazing in wonder at the runaway engine, which was fast growing smaller in the distance.

A message was soon going over the wire, directing the arrest of Blazer, whose description was given, at Jasper, a station about ten miles distant from Green Valley. The sheriff followed the wild engine on a hand car, having supplied himself with a revolver.

While the pursuit and escape above described was taking place, a remarkable scene was being enacted at the white schoolhouse in Green Valley.

CHAPTER XVII

THE OUTCOME

Si finis bonus est, totum bonum erit

—*Gesta Romanorum*

James Wakely rose with the other pupils when the signal for dismissal was given Friday afternoon. His anxiety was somewhat relieved when he saw the teacher turn to write some words on the blackboard behind his desk. In a few seconds, all the scholars near James's desk had moved forward and the entire school was intent on reaching the door. Quickly stooping, he ignited a match, lighted the fuse, replaced the board, and then took his place in the marching column. He was the last one in the line. The thought of passing the master's desk on his way out struck faintness to his heart. What if Mr. Stockley should do what he had never done before—ask him to remain! The idea sent a cold shiver along his spine.

Horror! The master was speaking to him.

"James, can you remain a little while? There's something I want to talk with you about."

James's impulse was to plead a special engagement and ask if some other time would not answer the purpose. But this would necessitate explanations. In his state of nervous terror, his voice would be sure to tremble. Mr. Stockley's wonder and—the trembling boy feared—suspicion would be aroused. It would be five minutes before the fire in the fuse would reach the powder. Perhaps the master would detain him but

a minute. His heart was beating like a trip hammer. There was danger in staying but he dared not go.

In sheer desperation he turned aside and weakly sunk into a chair by the side of Stockley who had already seated himself at the desk.

"I have been thinking," began the schoolmaster, "about the organization of a literary society in the school. Several of the boys and girls have already spoken—why, what's the matter!"

James's eyes were staring at the clock on the opposite wall. He had not heard a word of what Stockley had said. Nearly half the time had elapsed and that terrible fuse was getting near the powder! There was an awful possibility that Arthur had overestimated the time!

"I—I think I'll have to go," he faltered with catching breath.

"Are you feeling ill?" Stockley asked, gently laying a hand on the boy's arm.

James tried to reply but could not utter a word; he attempted to rise but his limbs refused to support him. His lips were white; his breath came and went in gasps; his face was a picture of terror.

A hissing below the floor! a smell of powder! a volume of smoke! With a terrific shriek, the boy sprang out of his chair and fell to the floor in a faint.

Stockley dashed some water in his face and he soon revived.

"Sit here until you feel better," said Stockley, helping him to a chair.

There was a knock at the door, which was standing open and in the opening appeared the portly fig-

ure of Dr. Wakely, who sniffed the air inquiringly.

"Come in, Doctor," said Stockley, as he closed the door; "you seem surprised at the odor."

"Why, yes, I am surprised, but only at the particular kind of odor. I saw smoke coming out of the front door when I was a block away and I hurried, because I was afraid the schoolhouse was on fire. But seems to me this is powder smoke and not pine smoke."

"Yes, it is powder smoke. You don't understand it, of course. James and I do. It was to talk over a matter connected with the powder that I asked you to come up this afternoon."

At this point the front door was violently thrown open and Harry Dole burst into the room, followed by Mr. Blazer and—Arthur!

Harry was much excited.

"I seen the smoke and smelt the powder before I got here," he panted, "'n I's afeerd y'd been blowed to kingdom come."

He seemed embarrassed by the presence of the two men with their sons and acted as if he had something important to say to the schoolmaster. He was manifestly puzzled at seeing Arthur there.

"Gentlemen," said Stockley, "if you will take seats, I will explain why I have asked you to meet me here this afternoon. As what I have to say touches on private matters that will be of special interest to Mr. Blazer and Dr. Wakely, I'm sure Mr. Dole will excuse me if I make a private communication to them."

Harry's mind was relieved by finding Stockley safe. He took his dismissal in good part and withdrew

from the room. As he walked away, he suddenly stopped, slapped his leg and exclaimed, "Wal, that beats me! Arthur was in there with 'is dad; who'n thunder 's that fel'r that was runnin' away from Sheriff McKelvy!"

After closing the door, Stockley took a chair near his visitors.

"I have a story to tell," he said, "and a proposition to make. If you will patiently hear me through, I will be glad to receive suggestions from you and to co-operate with you in helping these boys to make the most of an opportunity.

"One evening, not long ago, when I was walking over the prairie near the village, I picked up a scrap of paper to use in working out a proposition in geometry. After reaching my room I wished to look at the drawing I had made and took the paper from my vest pocket for that purpose. Instead of my geometrical drawing, I found a writing over the names of these two boys. My geometry work had been done by moonlight on the reverse side. As the writing on this paper concerns me, I have taken the liberty of asking you gentlemen to meet the boys here when I restore their property to them. Now there are three names on this paper."—Stockley here read from the scrap—" 'Stockley the schoolmaster,' 'James Wakely,' and 'Arthur Blazer.' Shall Mr. Blazer and Dr. Wakefield hear the paper read? As my name is mentioned first, I will say that I have no objection. What do you say, James?"

James felt like a fox surrounded by a pack of yelp-

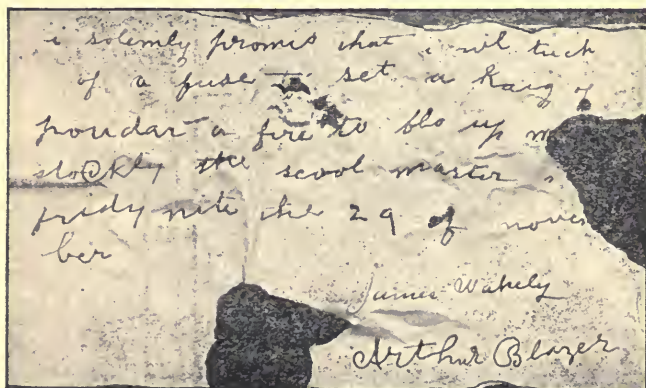
ing hounds with hunters eager to take his brush. He had not even a hole to hide his head in.

"It isn't quite fair...." he faltered.

"O, cut it short," exclaimed Arthur, "the jig's up 'n he may read what's on the paper ef he wants to."

"Let us hear it," said Dr. Wakely. Mr. Blazer made a confirmatory nod.

Stockley read the paper aloud and passed it to the two men for inspection. This is what they saw.



i solemnly promise that i will touch
of a fuse to set a kind of
powder a fire to blow up m
stockley the school master
friday night the 29 of novem
ber
James Wakely
Arthur Blazer

Mr. Blazer was silent.

"Now, Jim," began Dr. Wakely.

"If you will pardon my discourtesy in interrupting you," put in Stockley, "I would like to propose a plan for adjusting this matter right here and now. My plan is a very simple one—one, I trust, that will commend itself to the good judgment of you gentlemen and that will, I hope, be satisfactory to both of you boys.

"Let me say at the outset that I do not underesti-

mate the gravity of the offense the boys have committed; I do not forget that the law provides due punishment for it, but my plan provides for realizing the benefit of civil punishment without the unpleasant consequences that would ensue if the affair were taken into court.

"In the first place, the boys have been punished to a considerable extent already and it will be many days before they quite rid their minds of the load they are now carrying.

"Then, both boys are young, as they have a perfect right to be; that is no reproach to them, but we older ones have an advantage over them. They did not realize, as we would, the consequences of this act to me or to their families, or to themselves. I firmly believe they will never fall into such an error again.

"Now, Arthur, you have made a terrible mistake. Of course you realize that now—we all make mistakes. I find that when I have made one the best way is to put it right behind me and say: 'There, that *was* a mistake; I can't undo it and I've got to suffer for it in some way, but I'll "take my medicine" and then try never to commit a similar error again.' That seems to me better than trying to undo one mistake by making another. I don't know everything you and James have done and I don't care to. I believe that you are, at heart, a straight fellow and I'll make you a square offer as between man and man. Come back to school—come Monday morning. I want you back. I'll help you all I can and you shall never be reminded of the past by any act, word, or look of mine. I don't ask you to promise anything for the future for I am cer-

tain you will take care of that. What do you say? Is it a bargain?"

Arthur had listened eagerly and as Stockley's plan unfolded, his face had slowly been transformed from its (of late) habitual malevolence into successive expressions of surprise, pleasure, wonder, admiration, and hearty acquiescence. He grasped the hand the schoolmaster had held out to him and said vehemently:

"By thunder, I will!"

"I believed you would do it," said Stockley, shaking Arthur's hand heartily, "and I will dismiss the matter from my mind altogether. What about you James; shall we make a new start in mutual confidence? You see the stand Arthur has taken; you can work together along the new line as you have along the old and Arthur, I think, will be a great help to you. Do you want to continue in school on the same terms Arthur has accepted?"

"Why, yes, I guess so," said James. It was the best response that could be expected from a boy of his disposition and the master was wise enough not to insist on a less equivocal assent.

The two men had little to say. Both were relieved by Stockley's disposition to keep the affair quiet and forego criminal prosecution. After some commonplace expressions of thankfulness, for his forbearance, they withdrew, accompanied by their sons.

Arthur wondered how the incriminating paper happened to be blown out of the hole in the oak tree, into which he had thrust it and across the prairie to Stockley's feet. He even made a special visit to the tree hardly expecting to solve the mystery. A squir-

rel's nest in the opening explained the matter to his satisfaction. He concluded that the squirrels had pawed the paper out by accident or design, and that the wind had done the rest.

It must not be supposed that Arthur had come out of the affair without punishment—scot-free. The period during which he was concocting and executing the plot against the schoolmaster was the most unhappy time of his life. He was tortured with remorse (which he refused to acknowledge even to himself) for he knew that he was wholly wrong and that Stockley was wholly right. It was an added sting to the bite of conscience that he had a sincere admiration for the man against whom he was conspiring. If he had been familiar with Byron, he might have exclaimed with the poet

The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone.

If it had not been for a characteristic pride in never giving up he would have abandoned the nefarious plot in its infancy. His suffering had been as great as that of James, but his greater self control had enabled him to conceal it.

The reader will have divined that after Stockley had read the tell-tale agreement at the conclusion of his evening study of Euclid by moonlight, he had repaired to the schoolhouse and had made the mine harmless by the removal of most of the material of which it was made—leaving enough powder to give the vice conspirator a wholesome shock.

It will be remembered that one day when Arthur was eating his luncheon in the stone quarry, as re-

lated in Chapter V, he read a description of a criminal who bore a striking resemblance to himself and was in hiding near Green Valley. Both Harry Dole and Sheriff McKelvy had been deceived by the likeness of the fugitive to Arthur when Harry had started the officer of the law off on his trail. The murderer was duly captured and brought to trial.

As for Arthur's presence at the schoolhouse, he had run into his father's arms before he had gone a block from Baldritt's barn. Mr. Blazer took Arthur with him to the schoolhouse, having been requested to meet Mr. Stockley there and to bring Arthur with him if possible.

Explanations followed between Stockley and Harry Dole as well as between Harry and the sheriff. At the request of the teacher, these two and the justice who had issued the warrant refrained from giving publicity to the affair. When questioned by the curious, they were close-mouthed.

Stockley was employed to teach the Green Valley School the following year. Mrs. Dow undertook to secure the election of a hostile trustee, but he was "snowed under," largely through the electioneering of Mary Milligan, Eva Black, Allie Harley, Urline Simpton, Harry Dole, John McMillan, and Arthur Blazer! Arthur never became a brilliant scholar, but he was a stanch friend of the schoolmaster, under whose influence he developed into a well-behaved, self-respecting young man.

James Wakely—well, he never gave the master serious trouble after the day of the explosion.

The good understanding between the principal and

his assistant progressed satisfactorily and was mutually helpful. To say more would not be pertinent to our tale. The purpose of this chronicle was simply to tell the story of one term in the Green Valley School.

THE END.





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